MR. BURNS

a post-electric play

by

Anne Washburn

Music by Michael Friedman Lyrics by Anne Washburn

“Playwrights Horizons, Inc. produced the New York City premiere of the play off-Broadway in 2013"

“Originally produced in June, 2012 by Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, Washington, DC, Howard Shalwitz, Artistic Director; Jeffrey Herrmann, Managing Director “

"Mr. Burns was commissioned by The Civilians, New York, NY Steven Cosson, Artistic Director"

"For the language of the remembering of the Simpsons' episode, Cape Feare, the author would like to credit the Civilians actors involved in the initial workshop: Quincy Tyler Bernstine, Maria Dizzia, Gibson Frazier, Matt Maher, Jennifer Morris, Colleen Werthmann and Sam Breslin Wright”

Performance Rights licensed by Samuel French
http://www.samuelfrench.com/

Dear Mr. Burns Director,

Thank you so much for taking on this beast of a play. I think it will task you, and your cast and design team, but I hope it will be as much fun and reward as it is struggle.

Burns is, of course, *yours* now -- but I've now been involved fully with three productions of it and have arrived at some observations about aspects of the play which may not be obvious in the script or which run counter to actor's usual instincts, and which I think it would be inelegant or not quite possible to specify in the text, but which I think are necessary for the play to live fully and of which I think the director should have in their pocket.

My hope is that these are illuminating, rather than prescriptive.

Thanks again.

All my best

Act 1

Laughing – in general, the characters should laugh no more often than specified in the script – which is to say, less often than a group of modern day people would laugh if they were hanging out around a campfire telling comic stories for fun. There are bursts of enjoyment/relief/appreciation but in general this group is closely focused on, and most concerned with, the task at hand.

The names of the dead – important to remember that these characters have a different relationship, at this point, to death than we do. Their relationship to it can, in *general*, be said to be rather detached. So the names shouldn't, in general, feel *significant.*

The long pauses in Act 1 are important, especially the one before Maria's monologue which should be very long indeed.

Act 2

This performance troupe is not doing a bad job. Chart Hits, in particular, should be performed as well as possible. They are not trained professional actors and singers but they have had years of practice and are highly motivated to do an excellent job. It's important in this act not to condescend to them, or to their Act 2 audience which would be filled with people much like yourself.

The dynamic of 'putting on a show' will be so familiar to everyone involved in creating this production that it's important to remember that the stakes are entirely different: if the show goes badly they don't eat. If a number of shows go badly they disband. If they disband, they are alone in a word in which it is very difficult to find safe purchase.

At various points the characters will offer praise or congratulations for moments or ideas; it's important that the praise and encouragement offered is cool and judicious in tone and tenor; they aren't a group of contemporary actors encouraging each other, they are, in a sense, evaluating their group fitness for survival.

The women's costumes in the Act 2 medley are worrisomely sexual, sexier than we think those characters would be comfortable with in pre-disaster or ideal circumstances.

The commercial shouldn't be performed satirically, as we currently do when we 'send up' a commercial; that wouldn't be of interest to them. It's Reality Porn.

Because we, in our culture, will commonly satirize commercials and pop hits, it's tempting to bring that spirit of satire to the 'commercial' and to the pop medley. But it's never interesting to satirize something which isn't powerful and in this new reality commercials and corporations are non-existent, and there are no record companies or pop stars. The commercial is best approached as tantalizing reality porn – Quincy is a good actress who is selling, not products, but the memory and experience of lost foods –
and the pop songs are either expressions of power and solidarity, or, they are a way in which the performers AND future audience can touch upon the powerful emotions of fear, confusion, loss, and mourning which no one can indulge in (re: how swiftly and decisively everyone moves to shut Gibson down when he starts to freak out) in their normal life. The End Of Everything is a pop hit (presumably a big deal right before everything fell apart) about a breakup but in this context it's a way of talking about a past which no one onstage or in the audience is able to mourn directly.

When The End of Everything finishes, please give just a little moment for the despair to land before hope restarts with "I'm gonna make it to Heaven"

In Act 2, Jenny is involved with Sam and Quincy is with Matt. This should be made delicately clear but 'couple dynamics' would be charged in such a small group and people probably generally refrain from obvious displays of coupledom.

Please note that throughout Act 2 Quincy is at odds with Matt, and the group, in a state of growing irritation.

Act 3

The performers in Act 3 are probably not professionals, probably more like experienced amateurs, but there should be nothing 'amateurish' about their performances. They are amateur in the sense of doing it for love/glory, rather than less able. They should be skilled, confident, effective, and popular performers.

They shouldn't perform the 'voices' of the Simpsons characters and the characters shouldn't be represented comically – 75 years have passed and Apu is a sincere businessman, Willy a hard working man of the soil – these characters are Noble Tropes.

Troy McLure is not a fatuous newscaster (something they wouldn't have a real concept of) but something along the lines of a noble but flawed messenger character, a herald.

Edna Krabappel, is a killjoy on the Simpsons, but a teacher – a keeper of knowledge -- would have a very different significance then, and be much more revered. Might be interesting to give her glasses, real or signified, which would not only signal wise-intellectual but which are also a delicate expensive difficult piece of technology.

Burns is scary and real as well as supernatural – a brutal villain who sometimes amuses himself by playing something of the fop. The physical space between him and the other characters should be something all the characters are keeping very close track of (their physical relationship to him should never be casual) and he should certainly never touch anyone with his bare hands unless he is actively involved in killing them.

Masking of some sort might be useful to establish identity in the Springfield Disaster section of Act 3, but once we move into the action with the family strong make up choices rather than masks should establish character -- as they would have done in the gaslight melodramas of the Victorian era which this future theater is probably technologically closest to.

The death of Homer needs to be a very big deal.

The largest task of making Act 3 is to consider what experience would be meaningful, interesting, and exciting to the audiences of *that* time, and why.

Consider if character need time to get in to songs, and some of the songs may need time and space to land after they are sung.

Please note that no one alive in Act 3 has ever experienced hot cocoa

General tone and tenor of Act 3: the act has some definite comic/goofy elements, but the performance is essentially a serious one.

General:

Set: The script describes a proscenium in Act 3 carved with reasonably intact but not exact Simpsons characters (kind of in the manner of a totem pole) which were at one time gaudily and carefully painted and which are now rather chipped and weathered. This strikes me as expensive and difficult to realize thoroughly and you shouldn't consider yourself bound to it but please consider a design equivalent which can impart the same information which is: that there is a fixed theater (implies a more stable society) devoted entirely to The Simpsons plays which have been running for a while and are also probably not the very latest in cultural experience.

(These Simpsons characters shouldn't look so much like *our* Simpsons characters. It's not so much that people wouldn't know what the Simpsons used to look like -- as there would still be printed matter available -- more that they are no longer as interested in what the Simpsons looked like and meant for <u>us</u>, as they are in what the Simpsons have become for *them*; think of how representations of Santa Claus have changed over the last 150 years)

Stage directions: The stage directions are actually rather thought out, and should be considered part of the text as a whole. That doesn't mean it's impossible to change them to adjust to the necessities of staging and interpretation (in the third act especially) but please take them seriously.

Punctuation: A lack of punctuation, in a long speech in particular, doesn't generally mean that an actor should take it at a rapid clip it means, instead, that the actor should find their own way through it, in fact it generally means it might need to be a fraction slower than a punctuated speech.

This play is set in the very near future

Then 7 years after that

Then 75 years after *that*.

Notes on the Play

In 2008 I was commissioned by the Civilians, an investigative theater group based in NYC, to work on an idea I'd been wondering about for years: what would happen to a pop culture narrative pushed past the fall of civilization.

For a week that summer director Steve Cosson and I hunkered in a disused bank vault/free rehearsal space deep under Wall Street with Civilians actors Quincy Bernstine, Maria Dizzia, Gibson Frazier, Matt Maher, Jenny Morris, Sam Wright, and Colleen Werthmann.

We tasked them with remembering Simpson's episodes, and the dialogue around the remembering of the episode in the first act (and the small section of the episode rehearsed in the second act) is largely verbatim from those sessions.

It should be noted that the characters in this play bear at best a passing, and in many cases none whatsoever, resemblance to the actors initially involved in the project.

Notes on Staging

What It Looks Like: all illumination is from ostensibly non electric sources.

The first act takes place by firelight, outdoors.

The second act takes place in an interior under a skylight in the afternoon.

The third act takes place after nightfall, in an interior stage, lit with non-electric instrumentation: candles and oil lamps, probably, or gas.

The third act finale does use a motley assortment of electrical instruments, a few traditional theatrical lighting instruments but maybe also other old jury rigged pieces of electrical lighting – Christmas tree lights, practicals, etc., adapted with care and cunning. It should be impressive.

Costuming is an interesting question. In the first act people wear normal clothes but all Gibson's camping gear should look very new.

In the second act, clothing is looking a little worn, with a few newly made (sewn, knit) pieces.

In the third act everyone is 'costumed' to look like The Simpsons and should be wearing a combination of vintage pieces from the early 21th century, and new pieces which don't look quite right to our eyes.

In Act 3 the ensemble can productively have masks or half masks as they impersonate the citizens of Springfield, but for the main part of the story they should have heavy character makeup, perhaps ala Victorian gaslit melodramas.

Sam can productively have just a bit of a 'country' accent, West Virginia maybe, just a bit of one.

Characters

In order of appearance:

MATT
JENNY
MARIA
SAM
COLLEEN
GIBSON
QUINCY
EDNA

Notes on Notation

Words or phrases in square brackets are thought/implied, but not said.

Sentences which don't end in periods are thoughts which have come to a close but not been entirely concluded or dropped.

Every story ends on

a dark and raging river

The First Act

A warm night in early October.

End of season crickets.

Faintly, we can hear a stream.

Five people around a fire, on a mixed arrangement of indoor chairs, sports or lawn chairs and an expensive looking antique couch.

A woman is huddled a slight distance away, in relation to the group around the fire but not part of it.

MATT

It starts…the episode starts with Bart getting letters saying: "I'm going to kill you Bart".

JENNY

…Right…'I'm going to kill you Bart'…because doesn't Lisa, doesn't she have a pen pal or something?

MARIA

oh

MATT

No, that's something – uh – yes – she has a pen pal and that's like a that's an other yes it starts with she has a pen

JENNY

she has a pen pal from someone in some Asian country

MATT

Yes like a repressed country or something and uh Bart is like uh thinks that's – is making fun of her

JENNY

Something like that and then *he* gets a letter

MATT

Right right he gets the letter and it says written in what appears to be blood like: I'm going to kill you Bart

JENNY

But that's not how it starts-starts it starts – they're on the couch, Bart and Lisa and they're

MATT

Oh

JENNY

They're watching tv, right?

MATT

That is right. Yes. They are watching

JENNY/MATT

Itchy and Scratchy

MARIA

Oh…

JENNY

And it's …some Itchy and Scratchy episode

MARIA

Is that…that's the cartoon show they watch, right? It's

JENNY

It's incredibly violent

MATT

It's shockingly violent. And they think it's hilarious.

MARIA

Because they always die, right? They always die --

JENNY

The cat always dies. The cat always gets it really violently

MARIA
Somebody always gets chopped up to bits

JENNY
That's the cat. Itchy. Or is it Scratchy? Wait –

MATT
Itchy is the cunning mouse who always kills Scratchy who is the cat. And Bart and Lisa always think it's completely hilarious, it's disturbing, it's awesome

MARIA
I think. Yeah. I think I saw that the first time I saw that I thought oh…that's going too far.

MATT
It's absolutely going too far. It's so brilliant.

JENNY
So I remember that they're watching the episode and something…

MATT
They're watching it – and it's incredibly violent -- and Lisa is totally cracking up and Bart *isn't*

JENNY
Yes yes yes that's right, right? And Lisa is saying, like, that's really funny Bart why aren't you laughing or something and Bart is full of gloom because he's depressed because someone is trying to kill him…

MATT
And then the doorbell rings and it's the mail

JENNY
Yes. And *that's* when Lisa gets the pen-pal letter

MATT
And Bart, yes, that's when Bart gets another death threat and like no one, like everyone's really blasé about it and at one point he's like – and everything is shot like Cape Fear so like there are like all these smash cuts where its just like: Dunnnnnngh – where like they start on a start on a shot and then sort of widen out in this way that Cape Fear like

MARIA

The second Cape Fear

MATT

The second the DeNiro so it's like it'll be he'll open a letter and suddenly it'll be like a smash cut on a letter like "I'm going to kill you Bart!" Oiiiiiing! and then like widen out and at one point he's got all of the letters on the kitchen table and it's an overhead shot, all of these letters written in blood and it's like whomp whomp – well yeah that's the sound from the Cape Fear soundtrack that's the – whomp whomp whomp

JENNY

Oh, *yeah*: whomp whomp whomp whomp…

MATT MARIA JENNY

Whomp whomp whomp –

JENNY MATT

Whomp

MARIA

(simultaneously)

Wom – no.

JENNY MATT MARIA

whomp whomp whomp whomp, whomp whomp whomp whomp

Matt does a little conductoristic 'it goes here' gesture

wom wom wom –

MATT

And so it's that, it's that and it's all of them sitting around the kitchen table and it's like 'die Bart die I'm going to kill you Bart dah dah dah dah dah' and then's like one written in pen and he's like this one is written in pen and Homer's like oh I wrote that one because when (*Laughs tumultuously.)* when when ah Bart 'oh I wrote that one because for that time when Bart tattooed this on my butt' and he like pulls down his pants and his butt is tattooed with the word 'wide load'

Laughter.

and the whole family is like 'ahhhh!' and starts laughing laughing for like a really weirdly long time, Marge, Lisa, and the baby are just like: ha ha ha ha ha

….it's very….I just thought it was funny that they would just take a break from the episode to laugh at Homer, anyway…

JENNY

There's a court case

MATT

Right. Right right right: the court case. But *before* the court case. At the end of that sequence. You see uh a ketchup bottle spurting 'die Bart die' onto a letter it's a reveal and it's Sideshow Bob

MARIA

Sideshow Bob…

JENNY

Right. Played by Kelsey Grammer

MATT

And then he tastes – yeah, played by Kelsey Grammer and then he tastes

MARIA

Isn't Sideshow Bob the one with (*Her hands twirl briefly to indicate cascades of sproingy dreadlocks.*) the hair

MATT

The hair. Yes. Sideshow Bob is

JENNY

A clown

MATT

A clown gone wrong. Very very wrong.

MARIA

Okay but I thought. Mr. Burns. And a fish? A fish with three eyeballs?

MATT

(*Takes a microsecond to process this.*)

Blinky? No. No. That's a whole other episode.

JENNY

Mr. Burns runs the nuclear power plant.

MARIA
No I know that, but I thought – oh nevermind.

MATT
You're thinking of the episode where the nuclear power plant is polluting the Springfield river. But Burns doesn't try to kill him. Not in *that* episode.

MARIA
"Ex-cellent", right?

She flutters her fingers uncertainly.

MATT
"Ex-cellent"

He tents his expertly.

JENNY
And so he's writing letters. Sideshow Bob is writing letters. In ketchup.

MATT
And then he tastes the ketchup right before we go to a commercial – evily

(*Tasting it.*)
Mhhhhh

And then…

JENNY
And then he's on the stand.

MATT
Well there's a brief montage of him working out I remember there's a montage of him doing -- all these menacing shots of him lifting weights and then…aerobic calisthenics: (*Mincing sprightly voice.*) "one and two and three and…" and that's *that's* when we see the tattoos

JENNY
Wait what are the tattoos?

MATT

There are, there are some tattoos cause you see shots of him in prison doing um oh yeah because he only has three fingers, because the Simpsons characters only have three fingers

JENNY

Wait, is it really only three?

MARIA

Yeah that seems

MATT

Plus thumbs.

MARIA

Oh…okay.

JENNY

That's so weird I didn't know that. But that's ignorance for you right.

MATT

So because he only has three fingers you see the tattoos and they say:

L-u-v and h – like…

JENNY

Oh that's from the um

MATT

From

JENNY

From Do The Right Thing

MATT

No no it's from Do The Right Thing is also stealing from…

SAM

Night /of the Hunter.

MATT

Night of the Hunter

JENNY

Oh

MATT

Night of the Hunter he has, the villain has love and hate

JENNY

Oh

MATT

Tattooed on his hand

SAM

Who's also Robert Mitchum

MATT

Who's also Robert Mitchum who plays Cape Fear who plays De Niro's character in the original Cape Fear

SAM

"There's only two things in this world, love, and hate"

MATT

Yeah well Sideshow Bob has love and hate but it's l-u-v with an umlaut and I don't know how they do hate but its some weird they do some weird phonetic thing with the 'a' to make it read love and hate.

JENNY

And then we go right in after you see after that montage then you see it's Sideshow Bob in court

MATT

Yes

JENNY

And he's charming everyone in court…oh and doesn't he, doesn't Sideshow Bob have die Bart die tattooed on his chest and isn't she there a lady who's like, isn't she like: you have die Bart die and he's like no, that's German it says die Bart die

MATT

Die Bart die

Colleen laughs.

Everyone turns towards her.

She shrinks into herself again.

They continue as if they were not now trying to engage her attention.

MATT

And then the woman the woman in the jury box says anyone who knows German can't be a can't

JENNY

Oh that's right: anyone who knows German --

MATT

Anyone who knows German has to be a very nice man

Laughter.

JENNY

Anyone who speaks German, right

MATT

Anyone who speaks German

MARIA

Couldn't be

MATT

Couldn't be a bad man

Laughter.

JENNY

The Bart the. It's so awesome.

MATT

And then the prosecutor – that's a common Simpson's character the smarmy like prosecutor

"what are your feelings about Bart Simpson?"

MARIA
(*She doesn't.*)
Oh that guy right I think I remember that guy

MATT
Aaaaaah, is it not true that you repeatedly threatened to kill Bart Simpson

"Bart Simpson, that spirited little scamp" – and then you know all the lighting gets dark – "*who twice foiled my evil schemes and sent me to this urine soaked hell-hole…*" "we take exception to urine soaked hell hole – we prefer pee soaked stink hole" and Sideshow Bob is like "cheerfully withdrawn"

Laughter.

SAM
(*More of a whisper.*)
Heyhey –

His head is turned, looking into the woods around them.

They stop. Everyone is alert, listening acutely. Colleen is frozen, listening.

There is a very long pause.

SAM
It's nothing. It's nothing. I thought I heard something.

He quotes, but does not do the voice:

"Bart Simpson, that spirited little scamp"

MATT
Um…Right. Yes.

SAM

"Hellhole"

MATT
(*Super distracted*.)
Right. And then – right. Yes, so that's that's pretty much it and then so he's free. After that.

JENNY
(*Ditto.)*
Sideshow Bob is free. And he's walking…

MATT
and uh…

And then it's him walking out of the courtroom

MATT
(*Making a conscious effort to rally*.)
It's him walking out of the courtroom. Yes.

JENNY
Right, like: parolled.

MATT
So he's free and and (*Ah ha it comes to him*.) the Simpsons find out because they go to the movies and and it's again a spoof of a scene in Cape Fear like they all go to the movies and Sideshow Bob is sitting in front of them with a cigar

MARIA
Mh hm

MATT
Smoking a cigar and like laughing: hah hah hah

MARIA
The only thing I can remember about that whole movie Juliet Lewis like sucks Robert DeNiro's fingers in a gross way and then he bit Ileana Douglas's face, right?

JENNY
Right.

MARIA

Bit Ileana Douglas' face off that's all I remember.

JENNY

No no he kills the dog. Does he bite the lady's face?

MATT

(*With sidelong glance to Colleen. Ending that discussion*.)

He bites her face hard. But in front of Sideshow Bob, Homer is sitting with like an even bigger cigar laughing and laughing even louder and going "Hoh!" and Sideshow Bob is like 'oh now really that's just inappropriate' and that's and Bart and uh Bart says uh: 'it's you you're threatening to kill me!"

And Sideshow Bob says……What does he say do you remember what he says what the dialogue is?

MARIA

…no.

MATT

"It's you!" Bart says "you're the one who keeps sending me threatening letters", um…

and Sideshow Bob says…

Matt laughs.

oh god wait a minute – uh – uh there's some I remember I remember it's like…there's some, *thing*, where Sideshow Bob keeps meaning to say something dreadful but he says it's some linguistic thing where he says it wrong "*I'm* –" – oh, god it's really hard to

JENNY

That sounds totally familiar

MATT

they say something along the lines of "You…stay away from our son!" and Sideshow Bob retorts like "I…" oh this is torture I know this is really funny…

There's a blankish sort of pause.

MATT

Oh!

MARIA

Oh did you get it?

MATT

No. No but I just remembered well the whole first act is – who's sending letters so at one point Lisa is like: I know who did it and she calls up Moe the Bartender because she figures it must be Moe taking revenge for all the prank calls that Bart has been making and she calls the bar and Moe answers 'Moe's Tavern', and she's like Moe, we know its you and cut it out and Moe's like, 'oh my goodness, alright', and he goes in the back and there's an enormous like crowd of pandas all hanging hiding out in the back because he's been smuggling pandas from China they're all playing poker at these little tables and he's like: (*Voice.*) "Okay guys the gigs up get out of here andele andele" and all these pandas run out of Moe's bar, like, trailing poker chips…

JENNY

Oh right. Right.

MARIA

And isn't there something where –

SAM

(*A driving whisper.*)

Sssssssst.

Sam's hand is raised. His head is cocked. They all immediately fall silent, listening and watching him intently.

They listen.

Sam reaches behind him and pulls out a rifle. Matt pulls out a revolver and beams the flashlight through the forest offstage. Maria and Jenny have pulled out revolvers; Maria has a more powerful flashlight which she also runs through the darkness. Jenny has also pulled out a bowie knife and is placing it on the ground near her.

Colleen is up and on her haunches. Absolutely taut, moving not a muscle. Eyes wild, flicking everywhere.

Matt whispers: 'deer' and Sam shakes his head.

They're all frozen, listening, only the light is moving.

They hear something tiny, and all turn towards one direction.

Matt and Maria both turn their flashlights in the same spot.

Sam stands and aims his revolver, Matt stands, still holding the flashlight, revolver out, Jenny is up and aiming, Maria stays seated her fingers gripped on the light.

Colleen fades into the trees, in the opposite direction.

SAM

Come out!

GIBSON

I'm alright!

SAM

Come out!

GIBSON

I'm alright!

SAM

Get out here!

Sound of footfalls in underbrush.

GIBSON

If I was going to blow you away -- [I would have done it already]

Gibson appears onstage, hands raised. He has a well worn backpack and new looking hiking boots, a new looking windbreaker.

Sam stays standing with the rifle.

SAM

(*Efficiently.*)

Shut up.

Matt moves forward and slowly pats Gibson down, removing his pack and handing it to Jenny.

Jenny goes through it slowly while Maria, standing now, also covers Gibson with her revolver and flashlight.

Matt immediately finds and removes a pistol from the inside of Gibson's windbreaker. He continues to pat him down.

Jenny removes a knife kit almost immediately, and a very new atlas of the United States – which she sets aside -- then packets of camping food, a portable water purifier, several rolls of toilet paper, clothes, and at the bottom a few books and journals. She replaces everything in order retaining only the knives and the atlas.

She picks up the Atlas and looks through it, turning the pages carefully

JENNY

Road Atlas

Sam whistles, and looks through it briefly,

MATT

For where?

SAM

Whole country.

Matt comes over to look while retaining a loose gun trained on Gibson, Maria also still hold a gun on him.

Gibson is watching them with acute interest and manfully disguised anxiety.

There is a moment, an exchange of glances, and then, with a lingering near-reluctance, it is returned to him

Jenny passes the pack back to Matt who passes it back to Gibson although he retains the pistol.

Gibson stows the atlas back in the pack.

MATT

Thank you.

Where are you coming from?

GIBSON

Framingham.

MATT

Framingham, that's…

GIBSON

Massachusetts.

JENNY

What part of the state?

MATT

It's near Holliston right?

GIBSON

Yeah, nearish. It's in the Eastern part of the state, near I-90.

SAM

How did you come down?

GIBSON

I took – well I went over to Boston first.

SAM/JENNY

How is Boston?

GIBSON

Boston is a mess.

JENNY

How bad is it?

GIBSON

Yeah.

It's really bad.

JENNY

I have a sister.

GIBSON

I didn't see any women, I'm sorry. I just. I got there, I got out of there.

SAM

And then which way.

GIBSON

I went down 24 to Brockton. I was hearing rumors about a barricade around Bridgewater so I cut over to 95 and took that down to Providence. Providence was deserted, weirdly, not even a lot of bodies, maybe there was some kind of evacuation? I don't know.

MARIA

I think they were hit early. So maybe the government cleared people out.

GIBSON

Maybe. I guess. It was eerie, I got out of there in a hurry, I thought I should head for Stamford, I skirted up –

MATT

My wife was in Stamford. On business. She'd just checked herself into the hospital there when the city was put under quarantine.

GIBSON

I didn't actually go into Stamford, it was burned through, but there were definitely people in the area and it seemed okay.

MATT

Yea high. Fair haired

SAM

Wait wait, let's do this let's do this properly okay. I think it's important to do this properly.

MARIA

Right

MATT

Right. Okay right.

They all take a moment to locate notebooks; Sam pulls a little spiral bound out of his short pocket, Gibson digs into his pack, pulls out a school composition notebook with pages paperclipped towards the back.

(*To Maria*.) Do you want to start?

MARIA

Don't you?

MATT

No I'd rather. Uh. Give it a minute. You go.

MARIA

Mkay. Alright:

H. Harrison. Maureen Harrison. Don Harrison. 64, 65.

Microbeat – meaning Gibson's notebook.

You're not going to open that?

GIBSON

I've got a really good memory.

Microbeat of Maria Doubt.

Trust me. I really do.

MARIA

Holmes. Mel Holmes – that's a woman. 38.

K. Tim Kapner, Lisa Kapner

And they have two sons: Paul, he's 5. And Noah, 7.

Is it alright if I just look?

GIBSON

Yeah.

He hands the notebook over, she turns to the paperclipped section, scans a page, turns over scans another page, flips forward a few pages, looks, hands it back.

MARIA

Okay. Thank you. I just had to, you know.

GIBSON

Of course.

MARIA

Um….L. Nilia Larkin 14

W. Miriam Westabrook 36

and then this is kind of crazy because she was in California.

SAM

That's not crazy. People got out of California.

MARIA

It's crazy but she's my best friend since college.

Celia Campinelli.

GIBSON

Yeah. No. I'm sorry.

MATT
(*To Jenny.*)

Do you want to?

JENNY

You can. Go ahead.

Jenny's hand might be resting gently and unconsciously on Matt's leg, at this point, or vice versa.

MATT

D. DePaul.
Elizabeth DePaul 32
Cameron DePaul 38
E. Arden Edwards 22
I. Ingrassia. Lou Ingrassia, 39.
Jack Ingrassia 12
Stewart Ingrassia 6
Tabby Ingrassia 8 months.
L. Sarah Lewis 39.
(*Tiny pause to see if that one landed.*)
Erik Shanker 40
Timothy Wald 42

Gibson, who has been listening acutely, looks up.

GIBSON

No. Sorry.

MATT

Yup. Jenny?

JENNY

Mkay.

She concentrates for a moment:

B. Butler.
Angela Butler, 71
Sharon Butler 46. This is Boston.
Richard Butler 52
C. Cohen.
Miriele Cohen 17
Nina Cohen 19
Raul Cohen 15
G. Garber. Mark Garber 37
Casey Martin 39
Rolo Martinez 50

GIBSON

Wait a minute. Casey Martin.

JENNY

Casey Martin?

GIBSON

I've got a Casey Martin.

JENNY

He's got brown hair almost 6 feet

GIBSON

Brown hair, tall, yes.

He's looking in the book, flipping pages a bit.

JENNY

Glasses

GIBSON

(*From memory, still finding the exact spot.*)

Yes glasses

JENNY

Glasses and um,

She gestures around her own face, increasingly excited.

brown eyes?!

GIBSON
Glasses I don't know about the eyes.

JENNY
Lean. He's got a lean build.

GIBSON
Uh huh.

Gibson finds the page.

Bethesda.

JENNY
He's in Bethesda?

GIBSON
No, he's from Bethesda. Before that briefly D.C. and Scranton for college and before that Belmont. A "tiny tiny town in Maine".

JENNY
Oh. Fuck.

Okay.

Okay, that's not him.

GIBSON
He was working for Johns Hopkins Hospital in records administration.

JENNY
Yeah that's, that's really not him.

GIBSON
Sorry.

JENNY
I haven't talked to the guy in over a year, anyway, I don't even know why he's on my list. Um…

Do I have more?

She might be near tears at this point.

That was my

That was my ten right? Or do I …

MATT
(*Gently.*)
I wasn't counting it

GIBSON
I can do more.

She counts off swiftly on her fingers.

JENNY
Oh, no. I have one more. Charlie Barnard.

She sort of throws her hands up.

69. My crazy uncle. Shlumpy. Weird. I know you don't have him.

A pause.

GIBSON
No. Sorry.

JENNY
Sam?

SAM
H. Linda Hopkins 52
S. Ginny – or Virginia – Scott 60

He stops, Gibson waits for more

GIBSON
That's it?

SAM

I come from a small town. I know about everybody else.

Gibson nods.

JENNY

Oh, and we're also looking

She looks at Maria and they both glance into the forest

MARIA

We're also looking for a:

(*In a carrying voice*.)

Becca Wright. 12.

(*Low*.)

You don't have her.

GIBSON

(*His eyes flick into the forest*.)

Oh…no.

MARIA

(*Low*.)

I know.

(*Loud*.)

Thank you.

GIBSON

(*Not a real question*.)

Alright, so you're doing 10?

Everyone scrambles to get their notebooks open.

MARIA

Isn't it 10?

GIBSON

Seems like, last week or so, people are knocking it back to 8. Mine are:

E. Evans. Peter Evans 70
Estelle Evans 48
Richard Kahn 35 Sorry, that's K. Kahn. Richard.
L Jon Llewellyn. 37
S. Nolan Scott 36

MARIA

Okay wait, wait just a second

She's peering at her book and rotating it back and forth as she looks at names scribbled in the margins.

Let me just – I've got to write out a new book. I didn't leave enough room for the S's.

Okay, no.

GIBSON

Suarez. Lilia Suarez 38.
Petra Suarez-Evans 2
Cynthia Warner 52
Francis Warner 22
Noah Warner 27

They flip back and forth in their notebooks.

MATT

No. Sorry.

JENNY

No. Sorry.

MARIA
(*Shaking her head.*)

Uh uh.

Sam is checking very methodically.

SAM

No. I'm sorry.

A slight pause.

MATT

Hungry?

GIBSON

No, I'm alright.

SAM

Beer?

GIBSON

Yes. That would be great. Thanks.

SAM

I'll get it.

He steps offstage into the shrubbery.

There is another pause.

MARIA

How long have you been moving?

GIBSON

About a, month and a half. I've been stopping here and, uh, stopping there. Mainly I've just been going.

Little beat.

What about you?

JENNY

I've been here for about week. I'm from Baltimore. I left eleven weeks ago. I was in Wilmington for a while 'til about a month ago and then, I was really on the move for just about three weeks.

Around this point Matt's arm might be resting comfortably on Jenny's shoulders.

MATT

I got here 4 days ago. I was in New York. Then at my mother-in-law's cabin in the Catskills. I had to get out of there two weeks ago.

MARIA

I live here. Or, I lived here. Or no, I live here. Right, (*she gestures with deliberate vagueness.*) over there.

Sam returns with moist beers.

SAM

Stream cooled.

GIBSON

Oooh nice. Nice. Thank you.

SAM

Pleasure.

Sam passes them around. Gibson twists his beer open. They all sit down.

You came down to Stamford on 95.

GIBSON

No I cut over to 84 after Richmond --

you heard that the Millstone plant went up too?

MATT

Millstone? What's that is that…

GIBSON

Nuclear, yeah, at Waterford.

MARIA

Where is that.

GIBSON

On the coast, near Mystic.

MARIA

Wait I don't know where – I just know the movie title that's –

GIBSON

Northeast corner, right near the border with Rhode Island.

MARIA

So that's – uh uh – how many miles from here?

GIBSON

Well well over a hundred fifty/ it's –

JENNY

So that's fine right?

GIBSON

170something. 177? 78? I can check my Atlas.

JENNY

You weren't there.

GIBSON

No, no. I met a couple groups coming from there.

JENNY

They were there when it went up?

GIBSON

They were just scared. They were 20 miles away when it happened but they ran into some people coming from the area who were in rough shape.

JENNY

But that's fine.

MATT

It depends on the weather. On the wind.

JENNY

No but over one fifty?

MATT

I heard 10. I heard 20. I heard 50. I heard 50 miles but only for a few days. I heard 50 miles but only for a few months. I heard a hundred, for a hundred million years. I mean.

I just stay away. When I know how to stay away.

GIBSON

(*Looking at Atlas.)*

186.

MATT

Waterford we're fine. There are other plants lots closer.

Well, there are.

SAM

(*Steering it away*.)

Then you cut over to 84.

GIBSON

I cut over to 84; there are barricades on 84 from just east of Hartford until I don't know, I cut the whole scene a really wide berth

MARIA

I heard that Pennsylvania, that all of Pennsylvania. I heard that Illinois

JENNY

I don't think that's true. I think that's just a crazy rumor. I do.

SAM

There are a lot of crazy rumors. And then from 84?

MARIA

I heard that there are hundreds. Hundreds of plants. I didn't even know that.

JENNY

No. That's *definitely* not true.

MARIA

Plants all over. Plants you don't even know where they are there are so many.

JENNY

There's like a dozen. In the whole country? At the *most*. Like a dozen. Twenty at the most.

MARIA

I heard hundreds.

MATT

The plants are in the East part. Mainly.

There's a pause.

JENNY

It's not like it was sudden. There were weeks and weeks and weeks where it was pretty clear -- they had weeks and weeks and weeks to plan for this.

MATT

I think there was a lot of pressure, though. To keep the plants going, to keep the grid up, they were so worried about the grid going down and everyone freaking.

GIBSON

On the news there was this one guy who was saying, they no longer have the personnel, in a lot of places, that you can't just shut them down and walk away you have to have all of these people, hundreds of trained people, meticulously stow the uh, material away and uh, that they may have waited too long. Until too many of those people were sick.

JENNY

I didn't see this. When was this.

GIBSON

It was local. It was one of the last broadcasts before everyone started to go off the air.

There is a beat.

MATT

People are not competent. Can I just say that? People, are not competent.

There is a long, long pause.

MARIA

I ran into a guy in the Wal Mart– We were talking about duct tape – there isn't any left at the Wal Mart, of course, and I never got any before because I thought, well, really, what's the use, and now I'm sorry because it's handy and I hate going into houses, I'm not good with the stink, so we were talking about where would still have it – he had a really good suggestion which is the janitorial areas at schools – and anyway we were talking about duct tape, and he had a cousin who worked at a nuclear power plant, Oyster Creek it's near Asbury Park and he said

JENNY

Where is that. Where is Asbury Park. How many miles from here.

Gibson is reaching for his Atlas.

MATT

It's around a hundred.

JENNY

A hundred.

MATT

Indian Point is actually a lot closer.

JENNY

How much closer.

MARIA

About 30.

There is a pause.

SAM

What did he say? The guy. You ran into him at the Wal Mart and he said.

MARIA

He said that they're that what happens is that when the plant operators take the plant offline that the cooling pools, which is where, you know

MATT

Right.

MARIA

That that whole system continues to operate and that the radioactivity, the rods, are fine, basically, for as long as there's electrical power to the plant. They just sit there, it's fine. And that when the power goes out there are massive generators, and they continue to power the plant and the cooling pools for, weeks. But then they run out of fuel.

And the electricity stopped, and the fires started and everyone is really, distracted, and he realizes, he gradually realizes, you know I don't think anyone *is* thinking about this**.** And the weeks are kind of…ticking away.

JENNY

The fires were before.

MATT

The fires. No. The fires were after.

JENNY

The fires started before the grid went down.

MATT

The big fires. The crazy explosions. Those were after.

JENNY

Not where I was.

SAM

It depended on where you were.

MATT

Babe.

JENNY

Yeah I'm just. All right. Before. After. Before. (*To Maria*:) I'm sorry, he realizes.

He realizes no one is thinking about it.

MARIA

He uh…yeah.

There's a small pause.

He's thinking about it.

So he decides, well, okay. It's on me.

So he formulates this plan, where he's going to stock up on fuel and he's going to go to the plant, and find the generator shed, and he says the shed is going to be locked, because when people are panicking they aren't thinking they just lock. I'm going to have to break it open. I'll bring a crowbar I'll pry the fuck out of it I'll. I'll bust the shed open, and I'll refuel the generators, and that's, that's what I'll do, right, for months, that will be my task, this is what I will dedicate myself to, to refueling those massive generators. Until finally the generators will break down, because things always break down, but at that point…

I guess at that point it's different? The radioactivity has…settled? Or, like, the worst of it has bubbled away? He was excited, it wasn't clear.

MATT
It's still radioactive. It's still just as radioactive. For, like, a hundred thousand years it's still, just as radioactive.

MARIA
Yes but I think he thought it would be, the gasses wouldn't build up or whatever there wouldn't be this issue of explosions or plumes, anyway

JENNY
But he knew what he was talking about, right? He knew.

MARIA
Yeah but did he? His cousin worked in the guardbox at the gate. I mean, he had these terms.

And what he told me – what he told me, was that he had gone to do it, he had, he was living fifteen miles away so he sets out he walks it it takes him a day and a half because of a – anyway he walks it and he's there, he's at a gas station a mile from the main entrance. It's an utterly gorgeous day and he's siphoning off one of the tanks. He has containers. He has a dolly, or – what are those things, where it's a couple of planks, basically, on wheels like this (*She indicates dimension*.) and usually it has strips of carpeting on it?

SAM
(*Helpfully*.)

Yeah that's a dolly.

MARIA

Okay yes, so he has a dolly. He's got containers of gasoline. He's determined, he's set and ready to go. And then he has a, a. A flash? A very vivid -- just like how you picture something, a waking fantasy.

And he can see himself, at the front gate of the plant. And there's reactor A, right above him.

And he doesn't look at it he presses on and up the little service roadway and he's at the shed, the the service shed and so he, yes, he's totally picturing himself busting at the lock, until he busts it open. And he this shed is vast, and shadowy, and at the end of it this hulking generator. And he's maneuvering the dolly inside when he realizes, that there's no noise, in the shed, these big machines and it's so quiet. He lowers the dolly. He steps inside. There's the generator. He touches it: it's cold, dead. Too late.

And his heart is pounding. And he has a flutter in his stomach which he thought what is this, is this adrenaline? And he thinks: probably not. And this ache, starting up in his head.

JENNY

Wait this is how you know? Is that the first? Headache?

MARIA

This is what he. This is just what he said. He's got an ache. And the stomach.

And he leaves the shed and the reactor is right there, right above him, half in the sun light.

And now he gets the first wave of nausea and. He discovers he's shitting his pants.

And.

This is weird.

He doesn't want the reactor to get to watch him die.

So he starts off, back down the road. And he's thinking, all I want is to get around that curve up there. So I'm out of sight. Feets, just carry me that far. Feets don't fail me now.

And this is the point where he snaps out of it. He's standing at the station, with his dolly, and, gas canisters, and he looks up the roadway leading to the plant. And he knows he can't do it. He drops the siphon. He walks away.

He said: it's not knowing, that's the problem.

He said: I think I can handle anything, if I know what it is

I just can't manage the dread.

Bitty pause.

And then we talked about duct tape.

I have a box of it. You're welcome to some if you want.

There is a rather. Long. Pause.

Gibson sees an opportunity.

GIBSON
(*Very creepy.*)
O I'll stay away alright. I'll stay away…*forever.*

He has lunged from his seat in a very dramatic gesture.

Ghastly moment. Jenny manages to pull out her gun. Gibson sees it. They lock eyes for an instant, and then he realizes what's happened.

GIBSON
That's the line! It's: Oh I'll stay away from your son/ alright

MATT
(*Relief.*)

Oh

GIBSON

Stay away *forever*.

Laughter.

MARIA
(The *line*)

Oh

MATT

Yes. Yes. Yeah it's, I knew it was –

MARIA
(*To Jenny.*)

Thank God, right?

JENNY

I was going to blow you away, I swear to God.

"I'll stay away forever"

MATT
(*Piecing it together in his head.*)

Right. Right

SAM

They're in the movie theater

GIBSON

Marge says: you're an awful man – this is after he turns around and they, they're gasping and Bart says/ it's you

MATT
(*Simultaneously.)*

It's you

GIBSON

You're the one who's been trying to kill me and Marge says: you're an awful man, stay away from my son

and he says: Oh I'll stay away from your son alright. I'll stay away…*Forever*.

MATT

Yes. Yes.

GIBSON

Which freaks Homer out.

MATT

(*Laughter, thigh slapping*.)

Yes.

GIBSON

And then Sideshow Bob says oh no, sorry, sorry, that's no good, and he's frustrated, and he walks off.

JENNY

Awesome.

MATT

Yes. That is it.

MARIA

(*To Gibson*.)

That's great. That's so great.

JENNY

Can you do that with the rest of the episode?

MARIA

Oh *yes*.

GIBSON

I can't I can't I really wish I could.

JENNY

No you underestimate yourself, that was brilliant.

MARIA

That was so good.

GIBSON

I've actually never watched an episode of The Simpsons. Not all the way through. That bit comes from an ex girlfriend, she was a Simpsons *fiend*, she

used to have this thing this little routine–– like you'd say listen would you mind not…drumming your fingers like that and she'd say oh I'll stop drumming my fingers alright, I'll stop drumming them *forever*.

JENNY

Huh

GIBSON

Completely annoying. She's the one you really need, seriously, she knows all of them, she was always quoting from them.

There's that bit of a pause again.

MATT

I'm Matt by the way.

GIBSON

Gibson.

JENNY

Jenny.

MARIA

Maria.

SAM

Sam.

Maria is looking off into the woods to see if she can see Colleen.

GIBSON

You were in the middle of the episode.

MATT

We were. We were in the middle, of the episode…

JENNY

Where were we?

GIBSON

Pandas.

MATT

Pandas, right. The Pandas.

MARIA

And Moe was shoeing them away ‘andele andele’

JENNY

That was so much earlier we were actually

SAM

Movie theater.

MARIA

Right we were in the movie theater

MATT

I’ll stay away from your son alright, I’ll stay away *Forever*.

MARIA

So good.

JENNY

And then he goes off

MATT

He goes off and then next….

JENNY

They’re on a houseboat, right? On –

MATT

They’re on a houseboat.

JENNY

On, is it Cape Fear? In the cartoon?

MATT

Terror Lake.

JENNY

Right! And there are piranhas.

MATT

There are *piranhas.*

JENNY

And he's running, right? From the piranhas? He's running and…

MATT

Yes…yes…he *is* running – okay yes Sideshow Bob gets on the boat, and he cuts the line -- and he's going to – um – he's got a machete and …

JENNY

Oh

MATT

So he takes Bart, he takes Bart out of the hold, onto the deck, and Bart like (*Finds it.*) *runs away* and he runs to like the back deck and he looks over the railing and there are *crocodiles*

JENNY

Oh *right*, the crocodiles.

MATT

And the crocodiles are snapping up at him and Bart says: (*Intake of breath, and then:*) 'oh no!' and so he runs to the front of the boat and there are piranhas and he says: (*Intake of breath, and then:*) 'oh no!' and he runs to the back again and there's all these crocodiles and he's like: : (*Intake of breath, and then:*) 'oh…right.'

They all laugh at this.

JENNY

But wait we're forgetting…I think there's a cactus…before…

MATT

The *road trip*. When they're driving to Terror Lake –

MARIA

(*She remembers this one!)*

They drive – they drive through a cactus patch! They drive through a cactus patch! Right?!

MATT

Right, right right right! Homer's like: 'hey everybody – want to drive through that cactus patch?' and they're like: 'yay!' While Sideshow Bob is hanging on underneath the car: "Ouch! Ouch! Ouch!"

The three of them laugh merrily, Matt most of all.

That's right, they drive through a cactus field singing Gilbert and Sullivan "three little something something school girls we!" "Three Little Maids from School are we! Something something something something! They're singing Gilbert and Sullivan

JENNY

Because, yes, at the *end*

MATT

Because at the end, at the very end, Sideshow Bob performs HMS Pinafore. The entire, the entire Gilbert and Sullivan opera.

JENNY

and at some point, at some point him and Bart are doing a duet together.

MARIA

(*She's getting a very dim transmission*.)

'nope never…"
(Half sung.) 'nope never never never…'

MATT

Yeah, it's like:

MARIA

"No never?'

MATT

Yeah, "no never" and Bart's like "what never?" 'What no never?' 'no never!' 'no never?' 'no never!' and he's like, uh, (*Singing*.) sailors never never never get sick at sea!

GIBSON

(*Sung: casual, but firm*.)

I'm never, never sick at sea! "What, never?" "No, never!" "What, never?"

"Well, Hardly ever!"

"He's hardly ever sick at sea!"

MATT

Aha! *Yes*.

MARIA

Nice.

MATT

An aficionado eh?

GIBSON

Worse than that, I'm afraid: I belong to a small amateur society.

JENNY

Does that mean you can do School Girls?

GIBSON

I have played Pooh-Bah in The Mikado, *twice*.

MATT

Let's hear it!

GIBSON

You certain? Because the terrible truth is, you really only have to ask me once:

MARIA

Yes!

(Let's just pause to note parenthetically that these are none of them people who, in their previous life, would have enjoyed the idea of an impromptu Gilbert & Sullivan recital)

MATT

Hit me.

SAM

Bring it!

A tiny preparatory pause. A breath. Then, with precision:

GIBSON

Three little maids from school are we

Pert as a school-girl well can be

Filled to the brim with girlish glee

Three little maids from school

Everything is a source of fun

He does the little orchestral bit.

Nobody's safe, for we care for none

Ditto.

Life is a joke that's just begun

Ditto.

Three little maids from school

The lights have already begun to dim
He charges into the next verse with bounce and verve.

Three little maids who, all unwary

Come from a ladies' seminary

Freed from its genius tutelary

Three little maiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiids from school!

Colleen has crept back, and watches from the margin of the woods.

The Second Act

A projection: 7 Years Later

A cozy living room.

Gibson, in an armchair, is watching a tv which is facing away from us – he is holding a remote and is switching channels; a faint flickering plays across his face.

Quincy enters wearing an office suit, blouse, the heels, the leather purse, the earrings.

QUINCY

Ach.

GIBSON

Ach?

She lets her purse drop to the ground.

QUINCY

Such a day!

GIBSON

Yeah?

QUINCY

SUCH a day. You're just going to sit there, you aren't going to…come to…greet me…or

She's removing her earrings.

GIBSON

That's dogs. Sometimes children.

COLLEEN

Jenny I can see the plug.

Jenny emerges from backstage.

JENNY

Oh I thought I (*Sees the plug*.) oh alright. Do you want to go on, or…?

COLLEEN

Gibson is that where we set the chair?

Gibson leans over, looks at the spike marks

GIBSON

Yup.

Sam has drifted out from offstage.

SAM

That's the spot.

COLLEEN

Maybe closer.

GIBSON

You're not getting the (*He indicates light flickering on his face*.)

JENNY

Not really.

COLLEEN

Yeah. We just don't have enough candles.

SAM

I can rig it up for more easy.

COLLEEN

Not currently in the budget. Okay….

GIBSON

Richard's, I saw one of their tv scenes, you get the color also, it looks great, I got one of their guys a couple drinks after and he said they have this blue – cellophane plastic, this clear blue cellophane plastic over it so

JENNY

Yeah…

GIBSON

That wrap, remember? For food.

COLLEEN

Yeah very hard to come by.

MATT

Oh!

They look at him.

A mirror, right? In the back? Behind.

SAM

Right. Nice.

COLLEEN

Well worth trying.

SAM

There's one above the sink in the bathroom I can de-install.

MATT

We're gonna need to break it.

SAM

Yah.

GIBSON

Won't Lewis – that's his name, right?

JENNY

(*Confirming*.)

Lewis.

GIBSON

Won't he kick up a fuss?

COLLEEN

For what he's taking from us in percentage, I think we get a crummy mirror. Okay let's get this marked closer.

GIBSON

That gym was great.

COLLEEN

Roof caved in.

GIBSON

I know but. There isn't anything closer to the center?

JENNY

Not apparently.

GIBSON

I'm just surprised. We've been through here a lot.

MARIA

Colleen this should be a bigger foot motion, yes?

She pantomimes the stomping.

COLLEEN

Yeah it can be huge.

MATT

As long as you retract your foot fully, each time.

COLLEEN

Yeah all the way back, all the way forward. And Matt that second blank pause can actually be that moment/ longer

MATT

Longer. I know I know. Can we

MARIA

Yeah can we just run through the FBI scene again

COLLEEN

Oh no. Absolutely not. We've got to get the commercials in gear.

MARIA

But we've *got* to work on the episode the episode is so creaky.

COLLEEN

Absolutely. Tonight. Tonight we work on the episode.

MARIA

Okay but at this moment, I feel like it's more efficient, while it's in my head --

MATT

I'd actually I'd really love to go around again with my yelp of terror. I thought of a perfection.

JENNY

And the transition sucked. We have to work on the transition anyway.

QUINCY

The transition really did suck.

COLLEEN

Jesus Hell. Alright fine.

MARIA

From the beginning? That would be so great.

COLLEEN

Fine! But we've got to get it set it up in two seconds.

MARIA

Thank you.

COLLEEN

Two seconds!

As they de-assemble the living room:

JENNY

You know what has got to be more of a thing also: Sideshow Bob. The houseboat.

MARIA

Absolutely.

COLLEEN

Right. I know. Of course. Right.

JENNY

Now its just sort of: here I am clambering up the side of this houseboat, here I am shaking my fist, ah there's thunder, now I think I'll go inside it could just be much much more, you know, a *thing*

GIBSON

I would be more than happy for it to be more of a thing

MATT

Well it's the timing. Right now, it's all over the map.

GIBSON

Well we've never really set it.

JENNY

Yeah there's a lot of opportunity there.

COLLEEN

In our copious free time. Sam did you have a chance to adjust the padding on the rakes?

SAM

Yeah it should be a more comfortable thwack now.

GIBSON

Thank you Sam.

COLLEEN

Places!

And…

An FBI office. An agent speaks to Homer. Another agent lounges nearby.

FIRST AGENT

My name is Agent Seacrest Mr. Simpson, Agent Seacrest FBI Witness Protection Program.

HOMER

Uh huh.

FIRST AGENT

Mr. Simpson your family no longer needs to fear Sideshow Bob --

HOMER

Uh huh.

FIRST AGENT

We are relocating you to a houseboat, on Terror River.

He yanks down on a display screen – a map of Terror River and the adjacent scary surroundings is displayed.

HOMER

Aah!

FIRST AGENT

And you'll have a new identity.

HOMER

Woo hoo! O.J Simpson! O.J. Simpson!

FIRST AGENT

That identity is in use. From now on, Mr. Simpson, you will be: Mr. Thompson.

HOMER

Oooh.

FIRST AGENT

Do you understand that? That's your new identity: Mr. Thompson.

HOMER

Got it.

FIRST AGENT

Homer Simpson no longer exists -- you're Mr. Thompson now.

HOMER

Got it.

FIRST AGENT

Excellent. Let's just practice this a moment shall we? How are you, Mr. Thompson?

HOMER
(*Blink. Blink.*)

FIRST AGENT
Now that's you, remember. You're Mr. Thompson now.

HOMER
Right. Right. Got it.

FIRST AGENT
Good. Let's just run through that one more time.

Good Morning! Mr. Thompson. How are *you* today, *Mr. Thompson.*

HOMER
- - - - - -

FIRST AGENT
So when *I* say Mr. Thompson, you respond, *as* Mr. Thompson.

HOMER
Sure.

FIRST AGENT
Certain you're clear on this?

HOMER
Piece of cake.

FIRST AGENT
Really?

HOMER
Sure thing.

FIRST AGENT
Mr. Thompson!

HOMER
(*Blank.*)

SECOND AGENT

Okay look. I'm going to call you "Mr. Thompson" and when I say "Mr. Thompson" I'm going to *press* on your foot and when *I* press on your foot and say Mr. Thompson you say *hello*, okay?

HOMER

Fire away.

SECOND AGENT

Well Hello There Mr. Thompson (*Press*.), Mr. Thompson (*Press*.) hello (*Press*.) Mr. Thompson, (*Press*.) Mr. Thompson Hi.

In frustration he stamps on Homer's feet a few times.

Homer leans over, speaks surreptitiously to first agent.

HOMER

I think he's talking to you.

COLLEEN
(*Perfunctory*.)

Great.

MATT

Hey, can we just –

COLLEEN

In no universe. Onto the commercial! Go go go!

A living room is re-assembled.

As it is assembled the cast sings Hectic Day:

CAST

When its been a hectic day -- the cars the rush your crazy boss
When all you want to say is: stop the world and let me off
When all you need is one sweet smiling face to see you through
Brush off your shoes walk through the door your home is here for you
Your home is here for you…

An armchair on castors sails across the stage from one direction, and is grounded. A lamp is carried out considerably slower.

Gibson, in an armchair, is watching a tv which is facing away from us – he is holding a remote and is switching channels; a faint flickering plays across his face.

Quincy enters wearing an office suit, blouse, the heels, the leather purse, the earrings.

QUINCY

Ach.

GIBSON

Ach?

She lets her purse drop to the ground.

QUINCY

Such a day!

GIBSON

Yeah?

QUINCY

SUCH a day. You're just going to – sit there, you aren't going to…come to…greet me…or

She's removing her earrings.

GIBSON

That's dogs. Sometimes children.

Come on over here.

QUINCY

All the way over there? Really?

GIBSON

C'mere.

QUINCY

Hmmmm.

She makes a show of walking all the way over there and plopping into his lap.

GIBSON

Better?

QUINCY

A little. You aren't going to turn the sound up?

GIBSON

It's got to prove it's worthy.

QUINCY

Do you know what I want?

GIBSON

You want me.

QUINCY

No, no not you.

GIBSON

(*Maybe there's a wee bit of fondling.*)

Are you sure?

QUINCY

Positive. It's been SUCH a day do you know what I want?

GIBSON

You want a bath.

QUINCY

So badly. Traffic was nutsballs.

She slides off and wanders offstage.

The fluorescents at work are driving me crazy.

Sound of water.

You want to know the big news?

GIBSON
(*Concerned – layoffs?*)
What?

QUINCY
Someone is stealing lunches out of the refrigerator

GIBSON
Someone is what?

QUINCY
Stealing lunches! From the refrigerator!

She returns in a bathrobe. Maybe there is a bit of leg.

That's low, right?

GIBSON
(*Cheerful mild irony.*)
Very low. Lunches which are properly marked.

QUINCY
Yes. With a sharpie. In big (*Gesture.*) lettering.

Last Friday they took Raul's leftover Chinese: sweet 'n' sour pork, pineapple fried rice. And his Fritos.

GIBSON
And this was all in a bag

QUINCY
He knows the moment he lifts it up before he even opens it

JENNY
With his name on it in Sharpie

QUINCY
Oh fuck me. With his name on it. (*Restarting:*) And his Fritos.

GIBSON
And this was all in a bag

QUINCY

With his name on it! In sharpie! He knows the moment he lifts it up before he even opens it: why is this so light. Monday Leslie's pizza pocket, Tuesday Robbie's quarter pounder with cheese, *and*

From offstage: the sound of a breakage.

Everyone freezes, head swivels in that direction.

Gibson has fumbled his gun out from a pocket.

A long tense beat.

COLLEEN

Sam?

SAM
(*From off.*)

Yah.

COLLEEN

That the mirror?

He emerges, with a large shard of mirror.

SAM

Sorry 'bout that folks. Towel's gone, didn't want to risk a blanket.

Gibson tries to replace the gun surreptitiously.

Do you want to keep going or shall we try this out?

COLLEEN

No no let's take a look.

SAM

I'll need to install it but just to get a sense.

He carefully slides the glass into the tv case.
The flickering light is *brighter.*

GIBSON

Nice.

COLLEEN

Gibson sit back so we can get you in position…Sam that is an improvement. A definite definite improvement.

MARIA

Hurrah Sam!

MATT

Hello.

MARIA

Hurrah Matt!

COLLEEN

Excellent. No time for joy. Gibson you were, no, Quincy.

QUINCY

I was…oh. Um:

GIBSON

And.

QUINCY

And. (*Takes a moment to re-orient*.) <u>And</u> Michi brought in a homemade chocolate cake for the office, you know, so moist, thick fudge frosting, and she took a piece, and I came in right as she was putting it out and I had a piece

QUINCY

And Michael had a slice but 20 minutes later – 20 minutes later! – it was all gone.

All gone.

All in one day. You know what I mean?

GIBSON

Right.

QUINCY

All in one day. Nobody can eat all of that. This isn't someone who can't be bothered to go out. They're just taking it.

GIBSON

They're taking it just to take it.

QUINCY

Right? One of us is a predator.

A little pause.

GIBSON

You don't pack a lunch.

QUINCY

No, I eat out. (*Dreamily*.) I love Prêt a Manger. Their sandwiches are so cute, they're so tidily cut and packaged. I like the roast beef with arugula and parm, I also like the turkey club sandwich, the blt; it's cold outside, snow outside, but I'm tucked into the corner of the Pret cozy as can be with my perfect compact triangle of chicken salad and a hot chocolate and all the rest of the place just, gabbling, behind me.

The water stops, then after a moment starts up again.

Hang on, I'm going to add the bath salts, *before the tub is done filling*. And maybe some bath oil.

She goes offstage.

Oh it's all steamy in here.

Hang on…

Sound of person lowering herself in bath.

Oh…Oh…Oh…yummy.

GIBSON

(*Amused*.)

Nice bath?

QUINCY
(*Dreamy.*)
Really nice bath.

GIBSON
You want me to bring you a glass of Chablis?

QUINCY
Mmmmh.

Sound of mild splashing.

Gibson turns out towards the audience slightly:

GIBSON
Or mineral water, if you want a mineral water, with a squeeze of lemon in it, or lime. Or I could get you a grape Fanta. Or one of those Italian sodas you like. Or a cran-raspberry juice. Or a Diet Coke.

QUINCY
With ice?

To the audience, broadly:

GIBSON
Of course with ice. Why not with ice? The freezer is chock full of ice.

QUINCY
Sounds dreamy. I'll just have a Chablis. Or, no, a Diet Coke. No, a Chablis. God it's been a long day.

GIBSON
Sure thing.

How's the bath?

QUINCY
Delicious. Rejuvenating. I feel like a Brand New Woman.

A pause.

GIBSON

(*Out front.*)

Yeah?

COLLEEN

(*From back of house.*)

Yeah. (*Considering beat.*) Yeah. (*Professional:*) That's effective.

Quincy emerges from backstage.

QUINCY

It's good, right?

GIBSON

Yeah nice work, Jenny.

COLLEEN

It works.

JENNY

It's that fine line between tantalization and torture.

GIBSON

Why Chablis? Do we really have to be those kind of people?

JENNY

People respond well to Chablis.

GIBSON

I think people are forgetting the taste. And the ethos. They've reverted to pure sound pleasure: Chablis.

COLLEEN

It's an innocent wine. People like the innocence.

MARIA

Also, isn't Chablis one of those wines which was out of fashion but actually it's quite good?

GIBSON

No. Common misconception but, no. Quincy, really, do you want to be a Chablis drinker?

QUINCY

Seriously Gibson? At this point, all I care about my *imaginary* alcohol, is that it is aged.

COLLEEN

Gibson *I* was a Chablis drinker. Like many people, a proud proud Chablis drinker. (*Calling offstage*.) Hey what was up with the water?

MATT

(*From backstage*.)

Sorry. Sorry. My bad.

COLLEEN

Do you need more water back there?

MATT

(*Coming onstage*.)

I misarranged my buckets. I have a system. (*To Quincy*.) Sorry babe.

Quincy shrugs, ignores him.

Colleen charges backstage, Matt follows.

MARIA

Call the plumber!

GIBSON

What about Shiraz. That sounds fun too: Shiiiraaaaz!

JENNY

Shiraz makes a lot of people slightly nervous because they don't remember if they drank it or not and if they liked it or not or even if it was red or white. The point of a Commercial is to create a reality which is *welcoming*, not challenging.

GIBSON

Yeah but what about that whole, I feel like we're failing to exploit, you know, in commercials, it's not just about feeling cozy, and bounty, there was that whole other thing commercials used to do, like, there always used to be that question of identity. Like, it's not just what is the desire, it's *who has* the desire. I think people are ready for Status again.

JENNY

You're joking.

GIBSON

In baby steps. I think people are ready for Status.

JENNY

(*Turning every so slightly away*.)

Do you know what would be great, if we could get that *smell*. That bath salt *smell*.

QUINCY

Oh I hate that smell.

JENNY

If we melted some and heated them up in a pan?

QUINCY

We'll be stuck with that smell all night.

JENNY

If we just get a hit of it at the beginning.

QUINCY

I hate that smell. I'm not alone. Sam, you hate that bath salt smell, right?

SAM

What?

QUINCY

That bath salt smell, when the tub is filling with bath salts.

SAM

Are we doing that smell?

MATT

(*Poking his head out from offstage*.)

Wait, what? Because there's a lot going on back here already.

QUINCY

Baths salts, bubble bath, that chemical odor.

SAM

I like that smell.

MARIA

Where *are* the Diet Cokes? Does anyone know?

JENNY

I heard someone trucked them all to Denver.

COLLEEN

(*From backstage*.)

Do *not* relax. We'll have this resolved in a tick.

MARIA

I heard that too but that's a crazy rumor, right?

SAM

There's definitely a lot of trucking going on to Denver.

MARIA

But *all* of the Diet Cokes? There must have been so many Diet Cokes in circulation. Millions. I know a guy in Wichita who has a stash of Diet Cokes and do you know what he's selling them for? Lithium batteries. 2 a can. That's nuts. Can you imagine? I'd wait until winter and then I'd have it over ice. That *pop* sound, the sparkly fizz. "ahhhh".

GIBSON

Well if you figure. If you figure:

MARIA

Oh no.

GIBSON

If you figure population 300 million. Let's say half of that is women. 150 million. Let's say of that, like, 30 million are under 10. So that's 120 million…which is hard, let's say 50 million are under 10 or over 70 leaving 100 million women and let's pretend only *half* of them drink Diet Coke, 50 million, and let's pretend that they only have 2 a week 100 million and let's pretend that there's only 2 weeks worth in circulation so there should be at any given Before moment 200 million Diet Cokes around in shops and warehouses and then there's an After population of a million tops

JENNY

Less than that.

MATT

(*As he crosses the stage to grab something from off.*)

No one knows.

JENNY

It has to have been far less than that, just, percentagewise.

MARIA

It's not evenly distributed.

JENNY

And we lose half again as many afterwards. Those first few years. Half again as many.

MARIA

No.

JENNY

If not more.

MATT

(*As he crosses back.*)

No-one knows.

GIBSON

Let's say a million just to say and lets say half of which is women let's say a half million so for each remaining woman 400 Diet Cokes which is

QUINCY

Which actually isn't

JENNY

Over 7 years.

GIBSON

that's –

SAM

Figure half of them went up in the fires anyway.

MARIA

I was drinking a lot of them. I had them in the stream behind my place. It was hot. That summer.

QUINCY

And a lot of women aren't drinking them at all.

SAM

Men are drinking them too though. Men like the diet coke too.

JENNY

Gay men.

SAM

Now hey there.

JENNY

It's just a fact that gay men drink *more* diet coke than straight men

GIBSON

Two thousand one hundred something…

Matt emerges for this.

MATT

My uncle the big fat butcher, *guzzled* diet coke. By the 2-liter.

JENNY

Your uncle the big fat *gay* butcher.

MATT

Oh. Lame.

He returns.

GIBSON

Every 7 days. More or less, so. Once a week.

MARIA

I drank way more than that, when I could get hold of them. But I haven't had one for…3 years?

JENNY

Everyone was drinking it at first because of the water. People were going through soda whatever it was.

GIBSON

So actually that's, yeah. That's not so much.

MATT

(*Calling from backstage*.)

So they might just be gone.

MARIA

They might just be gone.

QUINCY

Except for the guy in Wichita.

JENNY

And a stash in Denver.

Colleen emerges, followed by Matt.

COLLEEN

Assuming that any of these numbers are even vaguely meaningful.

GIBSON

Right.

COLLEEN

All right we're going to move on to Chart Hits. Hey Gib (*This is a big deal*.) the candles.

GIBSON

Oh right, right, sorry.

He leans over and blows carefully into the tv, the light diminishes, extinguishes.

QUINCY

You know it's just as well because that stuff was going to kill you.

MARIA

No no no.

QUINCY

Don't worry I'm not going to lecture anybody, it's gone now, but that was a very

scary sweetener.

GIBSON

Hey can we go a little easier on the steam?

MATT

It's a bit much?

COLLEEN

Yeah how much are you using?

MATT

That was half a stick. But the eraser is still loaded, it's good for a few more sessions.

GIBSON

It takes me back to my substitute teacher days.

COLLEEN

Go easy on it. We've only got 6 boxes and there's a fire in Heretic Homer.

GIBSON

Wait, Heretic Homer, we don't really want Heretic Homer do we?

COLLEEN

We're negotiating for it.

QUINCY

We're negotiating for it? With Primetime Players?

MATT

Not with Primetime Players with/ The Reruns

MARIA

Reruns

QUINCY

No no, I know, the Reruns, when was that decided?

GIBSON

Wait that wasn't what we decided. Heretic Homer is a wildly inaccurate show.

COLLEEN

No, we did –

JENNY

We did, Gibson.

COLLEEN

you [Quincy] were at the Landing and what you [Gibson] don't remember --

QUINCY

Alright wait yes. Yes. We can't –

GIBSON

What don't I remember? I was there.

QUINCY

Okay obviously we can't decide every decision by quorum, but I think we should decide on a *category* of decision which is decided by quorum. And I think repertoire should fall within that category of decision.

COLLEEN

(*To Quincy. Perfunctory.*)

Right. Yes. Right. (*To Gibson.*) What you don't remember is that yes, we all agreed that Heretic Homer is a shitty show, but, a) we may be able to improve it. Matt has a line.

GIBSON

A *line*

COLLEEN

and b) Springfield Files is an even shittier show

GIBSON

But Springfield Files was a great show. People remember loving that episode.

COLLEEN

Back in the day. Yes. Our version sucks you know it does. If we don't play it we lose it anyway and every single time we *do* play it we diminish our reputation.

GIBSON

If we trade it we don't have a single show in our repertoire with Mr. Burns, which, this is not about me playing him it's the character, they really love him, *someone* is going to remember, someone is going to come forward.

COLLEEN

Yes. Obviously. Eventually. Look Gib, we went through all this, we decided.

JENNY

We/did

GIBSON

We decided

JENNY

we did. We had to make a decision on it they were going to offer Heretic to Richard's.

GIBSON

We decided.

MARIA

Yes.

GIBSON

Was I peeing? I don't remember this.

COLLEEN

You were in the room.

GIBSON

Was I drinking? I. Don't. *Remember*. This.

JENNY

I think you were angry. Maybe you weren't listening.

GIBSON

Yeah but was I

MARIA

You were drinking, maybe you were drunk. [Well all right:] We were all drunk.

Moment while he processes this.

GIBSON

I don't. I really don't.

Do you know what this is, do you know what this is, this is brain damage.

MARIA

(*This is exact and absolute*.)

Oh, no. Don't go there.

GIBSON

Of course it is. Deposits. Ruptures. Plumes**.** Seepage.

MATT

Gibson./ No. Really.

SAM

Gib.

JENNY

Gibson we're not going there.

GIBSON

We don't even know North Carolina every time it rains

MATT

Gibson put a *lid* on it.

MARIA

Gibson, please. Please please please.

GIBSON

(*Continues over*.)

West Vermont -- no one knows what happened to those people *no one knows what caused that* hundreds of miles from anything everything a-okay then skin peeling off

MATT SAM

Okay. No. Gibson

GIBSON

no-go-zones marked off with blocks of spray painted concrete and…electrical tape…that doesn't mean anything *no-one knows what's really going on* tanks with what in them, what and underground everyone's guessing /no one knows the boundaries or what's creeping and what's in the water or what's we don't even know what's been seeping all this time from wherever through shale or any or

COLLEEN

Yeah…okay…

JENNY

Gibson! Shut the fuck!

QUINCY
/No. Gibson. Jesus.

MARIA
Gibson please. Please please please.

GIBSON

We're breathing, we're drinking, we're eating*, it's all broken open, you know it has.*

COLLEEN

Shut up. Gibson. Shut up.

MATT

Really. Really.

SAM

Gibson.

Sam clasps Gibson hard, then clamps his hands on Gibson's skull, touches his forehead to Gibson's. It's a half embrace, half restraint, Gibson might be sobbing, doesn't have to be, Sam might touch his forehead to Gibson's, it's an unusual social interaction, like something we haven't quite seen before, half comforting, half hostile, weirdly intimate, not sexual; what makes it unusual is that everyone else seems to take it for granted and isn't uncomfortable.

SAM

We're not going to talk about that.

There is a small recombobulating pause.

GIBSON

It's just that, I don't remember us coming to a decision. I remember the discussion. I remember…chiming in. I don't remember any moment when it was settled. It really was settled?

COLLEEN

Yes.

GIBSON

I don't remember that.

Pause.

JENNY

I think you were angry, I think you were drinking, I think you weren't listening.

GIBSON

Yeah but.

SAM

You were drinking. It wasn't a great batch, either.

MARIA

It was my batch. I'm gonna own up. It was terrible. I had a headache the whole next day.

COLLEEN

(*To Gibson*.)

Right?

GIBSON

Right.

Right.

COLLEEN

Okay?

GIBSON

Right.

A Pause.

What was the line?

It takes Matt a moment.

MATT

It's a good one:

"and what if we've picked the wrong religion? Every week we're just making God madder and madder".

It's a great line. They're professionals. It doesn't provoke laughter.

GIBSON

Yeah, that's good. That's a great line. The Reruns don't have that right?

MATT

Right.

GIBSON

But that's it? Just one line.

JENNY

We decided, Gibson. We really did.

MATT

People are going to bring other lines forward. That's one people remember.

GIBSON

They didn't for them.

COLLEEN

We've got a better circuit, I really think we do. If the lines are out there, they will come to us. I have every faith.

GIBSON

Jenny shall we discuss the booth?

Jenny and Maria glance at each other. Sam clocks it.

SAM

(*To Jenny.*)

The booth?

JENNY
Gibson that was a private conversation.

GIBSON
I never pretended to be anything but lying there with my eyes closed resting.

MATT
This is *what* about the booth.

COLLEEN
Jenny?

JENNY
Something. Which I (*Glance at Gibson*.) have *not* brought to the attention of the group because it's serious and I'm not positive

MARIA
But you're pretty positive

JENNY
But I'm pretty positive that I don't know how much longer we can go on buying lines.

QUINCY
What, really.

MATT
Jenny, that's. No.

COLLEEN
That's not on the table. We rely on the booth.

JENNY
You aren't dealing with people. People are making anything up and when I tell them no, thanks, it's starting to get ugly.

COLLEEN
But you've had that. People making things up, people getting angry.

SAM
You get that all the time.

JENNY

I've gotten people who are hungry, and desperate. I've gotten people who are crazy. But after the show last week in Pond Creek a man came up to me, I do remember him vaguely, and he said you used my line. I said no…he said you used my line and you never paid me for it I said I can assure you, no, he said "Calm thyself, Bartron, and tell us now where the magic space crystals which can save the galaxy are hidden" I gave you that line, you said you didn't want it, and now you're using it, pay up. I said that can't have been the line you offered me.

I said look -- we found the day, we found the line I wrote down -- I said look, that's the line, that's your signature, that's not the line in the show

He said what is this book, what is it, it's pen on paper that doesn't mean anything, you rewrote the page, you forged my signature, you stole my line and I want my payment. And he knew, he knew it wasn't his line, he was lying to my face and he knew I knew he was lying.

This guy was bold. Lately people are bold, and that's new.

MATT

But we can't, not, if we if we stop buying lines, then we're going to lose out to shows which keep buying lines –

GIBSON

What if we restricted it just, to brokers, to people we have trusted relationships with.

MATT

But those guys…I don't know about those guys…they say they haven't got anything, you trade a show to Richards, suddenly they just 'happen' to have an entire scene. The best lines we get we get from people we don't know. People who walk right up to the booth.

MARIA

I got that person who wrote for Saturday Night Live.

QUINCY

Oh I remember that.

MATT

Yeah it was good, we bought it right?

MARIA

It was that whole chunk of Heart of Bartness plus some lines for Lisa the Vegetarian. And he said he had a really good piece of Much Apu About Nothing but he was the one, he said he'd have to join up, he said we'd have to take him with us.

I don't know what happened to him. Maybe he went to Richard's.

GIBSON
They're not taking people on now are they?

JENNY
Sometimes. They're also kicking people out.

MATT
Pond Creek. Pond Creek has never been great, right? We take Pond Creek off the route. Maybe we add Sulphur and Helena before we cross into Kansas. I know that's not great business, and it sucks for the horses, but they'd love to have us.

JENNY
It's not just Pond Creek. Muskogee has always been cool but two weeks ago

GIBSON
(*Automatically*.)
3 weeks ago.

JENNY
(*With a dismissive gesture*.)
3 weeks ago. I didn't like the feeling.

MARIA
Right.

QUINCY
No.

MATT
Look our episodes are getting pretty good, we're putting together a rather accurate show

QUINCY
Richard's is having the same problem too, I bet.

JENNY
Maybe their security detail is better than ours.

SAM

Right here sweetheart.

JENNY

Honey you do a great job but you're just hiring people town to town, Richard's has 6 guys on permanently.

GIBSON

Richard's can only be in one place at a time. We don't have to be Richard's. We don't need 23 shows.

MATT

They've got 27 now.

That's news.

MARIA

27? Whose did they buy?

COLLEEN

Thursday Night.

MARIA

(*This is a bummer.*)

Oh

JENNY

Those guys were losers anyway.

MARIA

You know…I've heard…

MATT

No. I know what you're going to say and that's definitely a rumor.

GIBSON

We don't need 27 shows. There's room for more than Richard's Couch.

COLLEEN

Let's not kid ourselves.

If Richard's has a strong enough security detail, they keep buying lines.

They keep buying lines they assemble superior shows.

Our shows look shitty in comparison. We lose audience. We lose more audience. Until we're selling our repertoire to Richard's show by show by show.

Thursday Night held out as long as they could. I think a lot of those guys went into the Shakespeares and some of them just sold themselves outright.

There's a kind of a pause.

QUINCY

I hear Richard's has a stash of lithiums, and ten of those super powerful camping flashlights, and they're going to do a dusk to dark showing of A Streetcar Named Marge, with a spotlight finale at the end.

A bit of a pause.

JENNY

They can't keep that up for long.

MARIA

Long enough though, right?

MATT

It still kills me they've got Streetcar.

A pause.

QUINCY

Our Commercials are excellent.

MARIA

Our commercials are *great*.

COLLEEN

They *are* great. They *are* excellent. We don't need the booth, for the commercials. Alright. Alright. Keeping it together. Moving on. There's only a few more hours of daylight and we have yet to run Chart Hits all the way through.

MATT

Chart Hits: (*Random 'Mexican' accent*.) Let's do eet!

MARIA

Chart hits!

COLLEEN

Sam, Matt, you got the car?

SAM

Rock 'n' Roll!

MATT

Booyah!

JENNY
(*On the fly*.)

Costumes no costumes?

COLLEEN

Absolutely costumes

QUINCY
(*Startled*.)

Goodness

JENNY

Costumes/ it shall be.

GIBSON

Has anyone seen my glasses? (*Finds them*.) Oh.

As people are getting into position:

MARIA

Wait but wait, is Toxic in or out what did we decide?

COLLEEN

In for the moment.

MARIA

In.

GIBSON

It is a piece of music which does not play well with others

COLLEEN

But I want it

GIBSON

But she wants it, so it's in for another go around.

They get in position for the commercial, wheeling the front half of a convertible (Oklahoma license plate) onto the stage.

GIBSON

1 2 3 4

MEN

Bum bum bum bum Bum bum bum bum

WOMEN

Zoom Zoom Zoom!

COLLEEN SAM

Driving through the American West!

WOMEN

Zoom Zoom Zoom!

MARIA GIBSON

Driving through the American East!

Somewhere in here Gibson realizes he still has his handgun somewhere on his person and he breaks hastily from the formation to place it by the side of the stage and then returns.

WOMEN

Zoom Zoom Zoom!

QUINCY MATT

Driving through the American South,

MARIA JENNY GIBSON

South West

COLLEEN SAM MATT

South East

MEN

Across the Plains

WOMEN

Along the Coasts

MEN

Straddling the Borders –

ALL

with the radio ON!

SAM

Pump up the volume!

ALL

Pump up the volume!

MANY

Crank up the tuuuuuuunes!

What follows is a medley of popular hits from the last 10 years – generally these are not sung in solo, but arranged for best group singing effect, there is bravura dancing during this, and costume changes – the ladies, in particular, should be changing into a variety of perhaps worrisomely sexy outfits – the overall effect should be highly choreographed, polished, entertaining, and without irony. The really characteristic instrumentations of these songs should be rendered as well, but vocally.

It includes:

Thunder and lightening sounds.

Heavy rain.

QUINCY

and I park the car but (and I'm parking the car)
I don't put on the brake and
you zip up your jacket and
my fingers start to shake

Because when you close that door when
You walk away its
The end of everything between us my
new life will start today

(this is the part
Where we say
Goodbye)

Yes now I know
That I've got
to say
goodbye

(To everything we are
It's the end of everything)

And I keep my cool
And I do not cry

(It's the end of everything
Yes it's the end of everything)

And you close the door and
I drive away and
I keep my hands steady
I didn't ask you to stay

now I'm on the highway and
I roll the top down
Storm lashes my face
As I speed from this town

I'm wet with the rain
I'm all drenched with tears
My body's been shaking
For what feels like a hundred years

This is the part
where I say
Goodbye

(To everything it's
The end of everything

Yes I know that
I've got to say goodbye)

(To everything it's
the end of everything)

ending with:

ALL

The

ALL

Thomp –

ALL

sons!

Duh Duh Duh Duh Duh Duh Duh Duh – Duh Duh Duh Dah!

The Simpson's family is now in the car, Homer is driving, he has a Witness Protection hat.

MARGE/JENNY

It's Cape Terror kids, our new home!

And that was not enough time for the quickchange. Obviously.

Obviously. As she is half Marge and half showgirl.

It's the wig, do I need to be in the last number?

COLLEEN

You do….

JENNY

Can this thing just be plopped? (*To Maria.*) if you can get the housecoat…

MARIA

Right, and so just [before]

JENNY

Yeah, because it's just. It's a hand issue. I don't have enough hands.

COLLEEN

Okay so you can be her wig hands, everyone else?

SAM

(*Bart is missing a piece.*)

Me, but that's just because I zagged, when I should have been zigging. I have the time.

QUINCY

(*Quincy was barely involved, actually.*)

Yeah I'm fine.

COLLEEN

Gib?

GIBSON

(*From beneath the car.*)

Yeah?

COLLEEN

You had enough time to get under there?

GIBSON

Yeah, did anyone see me?

COLLEEN

I wasn't looking. I'll keep an eye on it next time.

There is a thunk. Gibson crawls out from beneath the car, he is in full Sideshow Bob gear.

GIBSON

Hey, what if he has engine oil, on his face. Just a big blot of engine oil.

JENNY

Yeah.

GIBSON

Like on the nose and (*Gesturing*.) over.

SAM

On the eye area, like a black eye

QUINCY

Like one of those dogs.

COLLEEN

If you can get it [on in time]–

GIBSON

There's time. We could use I don't know what.

COLLEEN

Was that your thunk? Coming down? That wasn't your thunk.

GIBSON

That was my thunk.

COLLEEN

There's got to be more of a thunk.

GIBSON

I don't know how much more of a thunk I can with my bare body.

COLLEEN

If there's a board underneath it maybe

MATT

Or a sheet of metal. No.

SAM

A hollow board? A piece of one of those doors.

MATT

Yeah but when [are we going to get that under there].

SAM

You know I think I saw some. In a stash of lumber in the back.

He goes in search.

MATT

This is a whole other moving part. I just want to register that.

COLLEEN

It has to be a thing, that moment, it has to be more of a thing.

GIBSON

So what do you think blot here, blot there.

COLLEEN

Yeah that could be kind of great.

MARIA

You need something black but with that reddish sheen, like, viscous but also

QUINCY

But it's a cartoon I think even just, mud, something black and solid.

MARIA

But it can't look like mud it's got to look like engine oil. So it's not just that he's dirty but it's that thing like, all during the journey, he's *clinging* to the underbelly of the car, hot engine oil, in his face **uh** but he holds on, he perseveres. Like that's what makes him <u>scary</u>.

QUINCY

I just think, something on a person's face is funny. I think it's better if it's not realistic I think that's just distracting.

COLLEEN

Okay this is that discussion.

QUINCY

This is a cartoon. That's what we're doing. A cartoon. You keep trying to turn it into a Drama.

MARIA

I'm not trying to turn it into a Drama Quincy I'm trying to create a…richer sense of reality and that's part of what makes it funny; things are funniest when they're true. (*To everyone.*) Right?

She gets no playback.

QUINCY

I just think, if we're giving everything motivations, then where's the power, where's the joy. No motivation, no consequence, that's the *point* of a cartoon. Where else do we get to experience that, *nowhere*.

MARIA

I'm just saying I think we have a chance to like, to like, engage at the same time with, like…larger. …are we just entertaining them? We have an opportunity here to provide…*meaning*.

QUINCY

Meaning is everywhere. We get *Meaning* for free, whether we like it or not. Meaningless Entertainment, on the other hand, is actually really hard. Look if you don't like what we're trying to do why don't you go somewhere commensurate with your matchless aesthetic. Go to one of the Dramas. I heard that blonde in The West Wing, the one on the Tulsa circuit, is pretty sick. Maybe they'll take you in there. It's not like you're really pulling your weight here anyway.

There is a truly awful pause.

GIBSON

Quincy. Jesus Christ.

Maria walks offstage.

MATT

Babe.

QUINCY

What?

Sam wanders out innocently from backstage with the lumber.

SAM

I think I got it.

Weird beat. Colleen pulls it together.

COLLEEN
Alright we're going to keep it moving. Gib., can you get back in there? Under.

Gib.

GIBSON
(*After the tiniest moment.*)
Yes. Yeah. Right on it.

COLLEEN
Sideshow Bob, everyone. Sideshow Bob, ah, emerging.

SAM
Let me just slide this.

Gibson knocks on it.

COLLEEN
And are the rakes in position?

JENNY
Yup.

The others move backstage.

Gibson gets into position then

with an audible thunk

COLLEEN
Excellent. I heard that.

Sideshow Bob detaches himself from the chassis, and creeps out from under the car

(accompanied by creepy music)

he stands, creepy music, low thunder from the horizon, a crack of lightening

JENNY COLLEEN QUINCY

Wah Wah Wah Wah
Wah Wah Wah Wah
Wa Wa Wa

GIBSON

At last, Bart Simpson, at last! While you and your family cozy yourselves away in this houseboat; while you play cards, while you drink hot cocoa, I shall be lurking here, on the river bank, like a crocodile – only with much better skin, and a superlative singing voice – and come nightfall --

he steps forward, raising his hand to shake his fist…

(Alas, although he does not see it, he is just about to step on a rake)

And then is distracted by something at the back of the auditorium.

Show's not 'til tomorrow gentlemen.

Colleen turns and faces the audience, speaking to someone at the back of the auditorium.

COLLEEN

(*Sharp, an edge*.)

What's going on here?

GIBSON

It's fine, Colleen, it's fine – (*Out*.) something we can help you with?

Matt has emerged on one side, Jenny and Quincy on the other.

COLLEEN

(*Totally 100% combative*.)

If you don't have any business here, which you do not,

MATT

Colleen/ shut it.

JENNY

Colleen!

COLLEEN

I strongly suggest, *gentlemen* --

Jenny and Matt have moved forward.

The sound, from the back of the house, of weapons being taken off safeties

Motherfuckers

She bends down and pulls out a sidearm taped to her leg (or in some other maybe more practical way concealed on her person)

Jenny and Matt vault forward, along with Gibson, to restrain her

GIBSON

I think you'll find –

COLLEEN

Motherfuckers!!!

Gibson clamps his hand over her mouth.

GIBSON

I think you'll find pretty much anything which would be of interest in the back of our wagon. Maria?

From offstage: no file.

Maria?

There is an excruciating period of time before Maria deigns to emerge from backstage, then sees.

You have the key, right?

MARIA

(*Half frozen, half a whisper.*)

Yes.

GIBSON

Can you just bring it out?

She turns to go. A shot rings out from the back. Maria falls.

Chaos:

Jenny and Matt de-restrain Colleen who reaches again for her gun, fires it, it's jammed,

COLLEEN

Shit!

She drops to try to unjam it.

GIBSON

Go go go go go!

Sam appears from the back with a rifle.

Matt ducks backstage

Quincy grabs Colleen to drag her offstage tho she's still grappling with her gun, Jenny dips out briefly and re-emerges with a gun.

More shots ring out and Colleen falls

Sam and Jenny grab onto Colleen and aim for the back of the house as they back into the wings

VERY ABRUPT BLACKOUT

The Third Act

75 years later.

A proscenium arch, weathered and aged, with Simpson's characters carved into the side of it.

Ranged across the stage: a chorus of the Shades of Springfield.

Their faces bear a blurred similarity to faces we may recall from the tv series: Chief Wiggham, Nelson, Principle Skinner, Apu.

Edna Krabappel leads them.

Thunder

CHORUS OF THE SHADES OF SPRINGFIELD

There is a humming, and a musical set of syllables and sounds.

They create a highly musicalized version of an ambulance siren, then a version of a civil alert siren

Meanwhile some musical urgent something underneath

Meanwhile there is a choreography, and a dance.

EDNA KRABAPPEL

The call came on the radio

and then the siren blared

And one by one all over Springfield

lights in windows flared

The music continues to intensify and change.

As characters take shape they do so as individuals, not as cartoon characters, there is

no trace of voice or gesture from the original series.

CHORUS

The call came on the radio

Chief Piggum grabbed his cap

Apu said use these buckets

APU

There will be no charge for that

TROY MCLURE

(*Spoken*.)

Good-good-good-good evening, I'm Troy McClure, you may know me.

EDNA PLUS APU

And Willy grabbed his rake

WILLY

I shook it with a mighty curse

EDNA APU & WILLY

Ms Krabappel grabbed her bullhorn,

and Thelma grabbed her purse

TROY MCLURE

(*Spoken*.)

I'm here to report an incident at the Springfield Nucyalur [sic] Power Tower

ALL BUT FLANDERS

Ned Flanders seized his cross

FLANDERS

Because God is always handy

APU

now that Apu's back was turned Nelson

ALL BUT NELSON

grabbed the candy

NELSON [a half rap]

Yes I grabbed the candy and I jammed it in my mouth
And I ran whooping to the yelling and the crowd was moving south that crowd was surging to the end of town where walls of flame rose through the air

ALL

And we all ran over there

We ran towards the sirens blare

EDNA KRABAPPEL

The smoke is streaming through the night

ALL

and through the night a glare

We heard a boom was there a bomb

Mayor Quimby raised his hands for calm

Moe passed round pitchers of Chablis

EDNA KRABAPPEL

And no one shouted flee,

ALL

Yes no one thought to flee

EDNA KRABAPPEL

No, no one thought to flee

ALL

Waaa Waaa Waaa Waaa

TROY MCLURE

(*Spoken*.)

-- what's that Kent? I'm receiving a report from the site…

NELSON

(*A rap*.)

I said its only a fire the flames were cracking like bones I turned the corner rising over our homes the tower is broke no joke broken, smokin', I can't stop lookin' and catch a whiff of that smell that's not humans cookin? I said fellahs, ladies, follow after me -- there's people in there, there's employee we gotta --

ALL

Run we gotta run we gotta –

EDNA KRABAPPEL

Above the smoke there is a moon

TROY MCLURE

Reports from the site confirm that enigmatic Power Plant owner, M Burns, is inside the building --

ALL

Gotta run we gotta run we gotta

EDNA & WOMEN

Behind the flame a million stars

NELSON

Feets don't fail me feets don't fail me fuh-fuh-fuh feets don't fail me

(don't fail me feets!)

EDNA & WOMEN

The parking lot there's bodies strewn

TROY MCLURE

Remain calm. Stay where you are.

EDNA & WOMEN

Survivors struggle to their cars

TROY MCLURE

There is no reason to evacuate.

NELSON

Feets don't fail me fuh-feets don't fail me fuh-feets don't fail me now! No no no no don't fail me now!

ALL

And we just can't get there fast enough smoke whippin through the air make me gasp and stuff where the towers were are two pillars of light and I hear the screams in the lit up night and I'm stopped in my tracks just like Lot's wife

TROY MCLURE

Ka ka ka Kent you're breaking up Kent, you're breaking, breaking, Kent you're breaking

ALL

The darkness blooms with a radiant bright I know in my soul this the crazy life (upside inside out) I see you through the smoke (-uh-) (the sky is devil red) you reach for me but I'm broke (-uh-), (the world is made of flame) I twist and turn and choke (-uh-)

this is the vida loca, we are living the vida loca

(*A melded ambulance-siren.)*

Hee-ah Hee-ah Hee-ah Hee-ah

MORE

No one thought to flee no no-one knew to flee

Edna Krabappel has, with ceremony, opened a book. We may recognize it as Jenny's notebook, from Act 1.

EDNA KRABAPPEL

(*Half spoken half sung*.)

Lisa Marie Kapner, Quentin Louis Pease, Tavonda Ellis-Frazier, Georgia Ann Devris, Martin McKnight Levin, Susannah Sara Quinn, Cecilia Calerdon, Michael Scott Nguyen

TROY MCLURE

(*Half-spoken*.)

You you you you you may know me
You may have known me

EDNA KRABAPPEL at al.
(*Singing*.)
Huda Nizar Al-Zahawi, Jennifer Halloway, Alberto John DiRossi, Chai Samantha Wei

TROY MCLURE
(*Half-spoken.)*
Maybe you knew me
(*Sung*.)
Now there's no knowing me!

CHORUS
(*Singing*.)
Liz Owens, Bran Ostrowski, Roger Emerys, Juan Raul Murillo
Pete Aaronson, Joan Guzman, Sky Brady, Grace Yamamoto

NAMES until it's a rushing overload of overlapping names each contending seriously to be heard

Daria Dabrowski, Tamara Cavennah, Rebecca Bellamy, Darius James Baugh

Anthony Romanos, Hunter Horace Wright, Constance Delia Meyer, Rudolpho DeGroot

Anglea Rudenko, Young Martinez-Nam, Petra Komisarchik, Melody Hasan

Toby Harrold Wilson, Lydia Caryl Fekete, Kyle Samuel Perrin, Jonathan Stuart Rey

Neha Chowdhurry, Anita Deborah Brown, Muriel Ethel Friedman, Adam Lodge Dewan, Sharon Mimi Healey, Kenji Cavanaugh, Richard Dzindzichashvili, Torri Harvey Law

EDNA
No one knew to flee

WOMEN
Only one family

ADD MEN

Only one family

BART

Mom! Dad! Lisa! Maggie! THIS way!

ALL

Runs towards their destiny

On a dark and savage journey

Runs from catastrophe

To their final agony

The Simpsons

The the the the the the Simpsons

They sing a slightly eerie and way more complex variant of the Simpson's theme song:

Thunder

The curtain parts – the stage is the deck of a houseboat. In the center, the cabin.

The painted backdrop is a distant cousin of the pull-down map of Terror River from Act 2.

Bart steps forward and sings:

BART

I stand on the deck

I feel the boat sway

Bodies pass on the current

My old life floats away

The first drops of rain

The first hours of night

Our first moments of sorrow

Our first day of flight

HOMER

I'm a brand new man
It's a bold new day
My family is safe (Family – 2 syllable pronon.)
And we're sailing away

MARGE AND LISA

But we don't know where
We are sailing to
And we don't know what
We are going to do

HOMER

We'll sail to the horizon
And if we fall off
We'll pick ourselves up
We'll dust ourselves off

MARGE

There's a storm coming,

LISA

I know I know

MARGE

There's a storm coming,

LISA

I know I know

MARGE AND LISA

There's a storm coming

I knooooooow

I knooooooooow

MARGE and LISA

If we could only return to Springfield

Night was bright as day

Street lights shone on every corner

Lamps glowed in each café

The *movie theater* flickered

With every story known

You long to speak to someone

You pick up the *telephone*

The air is filled with music

The streets are filled with laughter

And when you want to eat something

You open the *refrigerador* [sic]

But if we had a telephone

It could only ring and ring

There's no one there to answer

Streets are filled with nothing

We want to go back to Springfield

To glide through all those days

Each crowd a pack of stories

Each heart a signal blaze

Springfield, Springfield

Springfield, Springfield

HOMER

You ladies with your fussing

Everything will be just fine

We'll play cards and drink *hot*

cocoa, have a real good time

We'll pretend there is no river

We'll pretend there is no night

We'll drop the shades ignore the storm

It will be alright

Yes it will be alright

Everything will be alright

They all go inside except for Bart who sings:

BART

The sky's a churning muddy green

The river now is black

The world is filled with lightning

Oh we're never going back

I know

From inside:

HOMER

Bart!

BART

Coming Dad.

There is no going back

He goes inside.

Sound of thunder

Sound of rain

Sound of thunder

Crack of lightening.

A gloved hand, grasps the first rung of the ladder

The cast has gathered, not in character, at the back of the stage.

Using the Cape Fear soundtrack as a base, they build an eerie soundscape:

CHORUS

Whaaa Whaaaa Whaaaa

whomp whom whomp whomp whomp whomp

Whaaaa- whaaaaa wahhh

whomp whomp whomp whomp whomp whomp

Whaaaa- whaaaaa wahhh

Another gloved hand grasps the ladder.

Grips there for a moment…

and then with a terrifying effort Burns

hauls himself up onto the deck, inch by inch, a sword clamped in his teeth.

He is a clown gone terribly wrong: Sideshow Bob's red dreadlocks have retracted into twin horn-like protuberances; he wears a sinister version of Burns's three piece suit, and the red clown paint smeared around his mouth may be a distant echo of Heath Ledger's Joker.

CHORUS

And now the setting of the day

Is hidden from us by the storm

We will not see the end of night

We will not see the morning light

He stands on the deck, burning with intensity. He might shake his fist. He takes it all in:

thunder

lightening

thunder

and then turns and saunter in.

From within the houseboat: screams.

The river rages through the night

The darkness rages toward the sea

The ocean storms and sprays ahead

And now he laughs and shakes his head

CHORUS

And day will never end this night

No day will never end this night

Scratchy, a mouse-demon, and Itchy, a cat-devil, lead the Simpsons Family onto the deck, all are bound, gagged, perhaps hooded.

Ala Three Little Maids…

ITCHY & SCRATCHY MEDLEY

Two little darling lads are we

Charming disarming full of glee

Frolicsome as such sprites can be…

Everyone's going to be sad

Burns opens the door.

Three little lads who all unwary

Worried a family – are we scary?

Come let us all be extra merry

BURNS
(*A low rasp, not sung*:)
Everyone's going to be sad

ITCHY & SCRATCHY
Things are going to tuuuuurn out bad!

BURNS
Itchy. Scratchy – whichever one you are:

He signals I&S to remove the gag from Bart.

Bart Simpson. After so many years.

BART
Mr. Burns. Looks like the cat dragged you in.

MR. BURNS
You're looking as fresh as a daisy;
life has been kind to you, a pity;
the world has so much to teach us, and
it's my responsibility and
yes I will confess it, my pleasure,
to see that you are educated

BART
Sucks for you I'm such a bad student

BURNS
I feel I can motivate you to learn;
Our first teacher is our loving family

He signals to Itchy and Scratchy. They do something menacy.

BART
(*Bluffing*.)
Loving family? Ha! Homer there is
a small time drunk, my sister is the most
annoying nerd on the planet and mom

God love her, ya gotta love 'er but that
blue hair, the nagging, well good riddance to
them all, that's what I say, I'm better off
without them, it's time I was my own man.

BURNS
You'll be alone Bart Simpson, soon enough.

BART
(*Trying to affect a casual air*.)
The beef you have is with me Mr. Burns
why don't you just let my family go now

BURNS
Let them go you say. Let them go where? Out
into the storm? That would hardly be kind.
I slipped the rope as I plunged from the dock:
we're mid stream now, in the middle of a
raging river; if the crocodiles don't
eat them the piranhas will and if the
piranhas won't the current will dash them
into a thousand pieces on the rocks
no, much better if we remain inside
tonight; we'll play cards, and drink *hot cocoa*.

Bart struggles against his bonds.

Bart busts out singing:

BART
M. Burns you'd better back away

You'd better toss those schemes aside

'Cause you're messin' with a Simpson

A man of fury and of pride!

Gagged, bound, Homer grunts his approval.

LISA

(*Singing.)*
That's right you're messing with The Simpsons!

BART
Cowabunga! Way to bust a gag, Lis!

LISA
Mind over Matter, lil'bro. Watch and learn.

Abruptly and with total brio they turn their heads towards Burns and sing with defiant vigor:

BART & LISA
That's right you're messing with The Simpsons!

We're a United Family

Yes you've provoked the wrath of Simpsons!

If you've got half a brain you'll flee.

LISA
You're gonna go from dreams of glory!

To the gutter and the skids

BART
There's a chance you coulda done it too…

TOGETHER
If it weren't for these darn --

I&S have moved behind them, with one violent motion, Bart is gagged.

LISA
O!

BURNS
Rebel Simpsons: I've come over all chills.

LISA

Now you look here, Mr. Burns! –

Lisa is gagged.

BURNS

A spitfire! Ex-*cellent.* You have the same
Antic spirit as your loveable scamp
brother I adore a little spitfire.

Just take a look at these wee enchanting
fistacuffs such a fierce determined wadge
of digits why, I could just eat them up.

He is degloving in a delicate and lingering fashion

Now take a gander at these babies here –
appetizing, no? No? You don't think so?
Oh -- I see you are distracted by my
tattoos: of course you are, they are very
interesting tattoos indeed for they
tell a very important story: the
story of the left hand and the right hand:
the story of the *world*: now pay very
close attention little children, *watch and learn*:

This is all, of course, enacted.

Right here we have Mr. L-O-V-E,
love. Proud and sassy just as pleased as punch.
But then along comes ol' H-A-T-E
hate, surly and sour as the day is long
and there's an eyeballin' and a snarlin'
And now there is a battle royale but
not to worry Love is a mighty mixer
and Love is a winnin' alright Love is –
oh but no, no, tell me it isn't so
Love isn't a winnin' no longer Love
is a strainin' Love is a strugglin'

I&S

(*Chanting*.)
No
no say it aint so!

BURNS
Chirrin it's so! Love
is down! Down for the count!

BURNS AND I & S
10! 9! 8! 7!

BURNS
Is that an eyelash I see flutterin' there?

No! Love is out cold!

I&S
6! 5!

BURNS
O wake up
Love, wake up -- Little Children, Ladies and
Gentlemen (*This is to the audience*.) we got to rouse Love in time
We've got to make such a Clatterin' and
a Callin' we got to wake Love up!
We got to make a clappin' and whoopin!
Oh wake Love up folks, wake Love up!

BURNS AND I & S
4! 3!

BURNS
O louder little children louder still!
Bang your hands together!

I&S
2!

BURNS
I see Love
Stirrin! I see Love fixin' to rise but
Will Love rise in *time*?! O shout to the roof
Ladies! Gentlemen throw your caps in the

air! And children, little children, *beat* your
hands together pound them as hard and as
fast as ever you can and yell! Yell for
Love, little children yell for Love –

BURNS AND I & S

1!

BURNS

…And…
up Love springs! Just in the nick of time and
beats ol' H-A-T-E handily!

The story has ended.

Reassuring, isn't it. So you see,
Little Lisa Simpson, I bring you love,
Love triumphant, love captivating love
Intoxicating, delectable, love
just so gosh darn yummy, here, have a taste:

Burns is about to slip his finger under Lisa's gag as she murphs in panic.

Homer busts his gag. Brave, very optimistic:

HOMER
(*Singing*.)

Just remember Little Lisa

Everything will be alright

Hope will always triumph

Day will always follow night

Everything will be alright

Everything will be al --

Burns clamps Homer's face. In a gesture which should recall Sam's Act 2 comforting of Gibson.

Everything stops for a moment: there is majesty, grandeur, eternity.

Homer sinks, dead, to the ground.

BURNS

You heard your daddy, pumpkin', every *(3 syllables on the every)*
little thing is gonna be just fine. Now
where was I? Oh that's right. I was singing:

(Maybe he takes a brief: mi mi mi mi mi mi moment to warm up.)

Baby, there's no use

In bawling

He has pulled Marge towards him, as if for a dance.

A guy like me

Should wear a warning

He breaks her neck, drops the body back towards I or S.

I'm dangerous

You're fallin'

Over the course of this next verse he slowly slips his thumb into Lisa's mouth.

ITCHY & SCRATCHY

There's no escape, I can't wait

BURNS

You need a hit babe I'll give you it

ITCHY & SCRATCHY

He's dangerous, I'm lovin' it

BURNS

Do you feel me now

ITCHY & SCRATCHY

He's toxic you're slipping under

BURNS

Just one taste of my poison paradise

ITCHY & SCRATCHY

O you love what he does tho it's so very toxic…

As Burns turns towards Bart he hears a baby's cry, or gurgle, from the houseboat: Maggie.

With a meaningful look towards Bart, who is contained by Itchy and Scratchy, Burns saunters back into the houseboat, which closes up behind him.

EDNA KRABAPPEL

When love first falls upon his knee

His mother heals him with a kiss

and this is how love comes to learn

hurt is succeeded by a bliss

From the houseboat we hear the sound of a baby crying, or laughing,

the sound terminates abruptly.

But hate knows every single wound

Leaves a scar that lasts forever

Hate knows that every story ends

On a dark and raging river

Hate knows every story ends

On a dark and raging river…

EDNA & CHORUS

And now the sky is filled with stars

The moon floats high the moon floats high

You cannot see them for the storm

The stars and moon are safe and warm

the birds are shaken from the trees

their nests are torn and blown away

they try to rise they try to fly

the wind fills in their wings they die

EDNA KRABAPPEL

Wings ripped apart by wind they die

Burns emerges from the houseboat.

BURNS

Your family can't help you any longer

Steady, don't even think of trying to jump
the crocodiles and piranhas will have
to wait, just until *I've* finished with you

Thunder, lightening, thunder

Now take a good last look at all of it.

Have you seen everything there is to see?

Then you'll want to make your final goodbyes

Thunder, lightening, thunder

Bart sings.

This song recalls the high point of the second act medley.

As he sings, a chorus files on stage, made up of his beloved family members, now shades with long beautiful wings, and possibly halos, who assist in the back up vocals and harmonizing.

BART

I stand on the deck

I don't feel the boat sway

My heart's already gone my

Soul's already slipped away

This is my final hour

In the heart of a storm

No peace in my heart

Nothing warm

This is the moment

When we say

Goodbye

The whole world and I

The whole world and I

And I keep my cool

And I do not cry

I only want
to say
goodbye

To everything

It's the end of everything

The woods are ablaze

lightening cracks in the sky

smoke full of ashes and

thunder on high,

I'm wet with the rain

I'm drenched with my tears

I've been alive for

What feels like a hundred years

This is the part where I say goodbye

This is my final lullabye

Everyone I love has gone

I'll have joined them, by the dawn

Yes I'll have vanished, by the dawn

If a musicality has been happening (humming, crooning etc.) it ceases abruptly when Burns speaks.

BURNS

Wonderful! I love a poignant warble.
You may think me soft; it *is* a foible.

He runs a menacing finger just almost touching the surface of Bart's skin.

This has been a sweet reverie, under
A dewy sky, but the dream is over
Wakey wakey Bart Simpson: time to die

BART

(*Simple. Empty. Broken.*)
Do you want me to kneel? Or stand. Or sit.

BURNS

Now is this the famous Simpsons Spirit?
It's in there somewhere – how I fear it! Boys:

At a snap from Burns I & S lay down a rhythm

Although you might refuse to believe that a gentleman with my feminine propensities my sweet sweet temper my love of babies amenities candies is gonna mash your skull open slide your eyeballs out of the sockets and gulp 'em down neat I'm going to enjoy the taste of your face and your defeat.

Wants a response.

Nothin'? A shame. You're sadly lacking zest
Let's make this interesting:

He signals Itchy & it passes him his gloves, which he puts on, and a naval saber, and it presses a cutlass into Bart's hand

do your best

BART

However you want. Let's just get it done.

HOMER

(*Singing*.)

You have to hope when hope is senseless son

BURNS

Certain you're ready? No last minute plea?

BART

Bring it. Hit me.

As Burns twirls his sword about in a teasing fashion:

HOMER

(*Singing*.)

You've got to breathe, when breath is useless

MARGE

(*Singing*.)

You've got to love when love is gone

LISA

(*Singing*.)

You've got to carry on, Bart

ALL

You've got to carry on!

Burns jabs his sword straight at Bart who instinctively raises his to block it.

BURNS

Bart Simpson: trust you to bungle dying

Bart looks at his raised sword with irritation.

BART

That was a reflex, I wasn't trying.

LISA

(*Singing*.)

You've got to keep your eyes open, when all you can see is shit

SHADE CHORUS

(*Singing*.)

Never surrender the world, never turn from it.

Swiftly this time, Burns operates his sword; again, Bart blocks it, there is a brief rapid exchange of swordplay.

BART

You just startled me -- I'm ready to die!

Burns laughs.

BURNS

Dear boy, your savage pose says that's a lie.

Bart looks down at himself, his fighting posture.

BART

I'm going to prove myself (*Shouting at Chorus*:) stop the music!

He throws his cutlass on the deck with a clatter.

(*To Burns, singing*:) This moment you own it better not let it go you've only taken two shots do not miss your chance don't blow this opportunity to end my lifetime

Bart closes his eyes.

Come on Bart get yourself into place face the long goodbye the final sigh sayonara suckers cold cruel world toodleoo

Opens his eyes. Spoken.

Burns, snap to it, let's see what you can do.

Burns laughs merrily, hands the sword to Itchy, and begins to deglove in a slow and sinister fashion one finger at a time as:

BURNS

(*With a bum bum bum bum varient underneath.*)

I'm not going to *strain* to dispatch you there's no escape hatch for you this boat is spinning on a river in a world that's wrong your family gone the forest on fire there's no life to aspire to no air no earth that won't expire you and if you could learn to hope again to conquer dread – (*Spoken.*) yes that's right, Ghost Simpsons, I'm not deaf, I've been perfectly aware of your off key musical maunderings from the beginning –

BART

Ghost Simpsons?

BURNS

(*Continuing.*)

it wouldn't Matter Little Bartlet you'd still be just as dead dead dead!

BART

(*He can't see them.*)

Mom? Dad?

GHOST SIMPSONS:

HOMER

Nothing protects us son, nothing holds us nothing leads us on but we tumble ahead anyway we scrape we bleed we bite you're going to fight and fight --

Itchy & Scratchy are swept up in the enthusiasm.

ITCHY & SCRATCHY

Fight and fight and fight and fight and fight!

BURNS

Itchy! Scratchy!

They remember themselves and reassume Menacing Flunky postures.

GHOST SIMPSONS
Fight and fight and fight and fight and fight!

Bart sings.

BART
There's no one looking after me

Just shadows and their history

There's nothing for me up ahead

The river curves and then I'm dead

But I believe that I'm going to stick around

For another second or two

Because I've never done

What I've been told

And Burns you don't want me to

I believe that I'm gonna stick around

For another second or two

Gonna make a little trouble

(To the family.)
Gonna cause a hullabaloo!

Bart takes a fighting stance with fists raised

This rouses great enthusiasm in the chorus.

Burns throws back his head and laughs.

BURNS

Another second *another second*

Or two there is nothing dear Boy nothing

Another second can do – not for *you*

Burns applies his sword in semi earnest

Bart is losing very badly

Burns is enjoying himself – perhaps I or S proffers a tray and he pauses, for a moment, to refresh himself with a swig of diet coke…

Bart has lost. Burns looms above him, and prepares to deliver the coup de gras

They both jolt briefly, then again.

They begin to jiggle and jostle about as the river becomes increasingly powerful.

(Everything is now taking place in slo motion.)

I&S

(*Pointing ahead.*)

Rapids!

BART & HIS FAMILY (and maybe Chorus)

Rapids!

BURNS

No!

BART & HIS FAMILY (and maybe Chorus)

Oh!

BURNS

Noooooooooooooo!

They hit the rapids proper.

All are flung about.

Itchy, is flung over the side.

Scratchy, is flung over the side.

Bart is fallen on the deck

Burns is flung forward and impaled upon Bart's sword.

BURNS

This is no Victory Bart Simpson and
don't imagine that it is you may have
Succeeded but you haven't Triumphed, no,
Only freakish dumb luck plucked you from me

(This next bit may be to the audience, and perhaps a little out of time.)

and if you think God or fate, fortune or
any assortment of sentimental
somesuch *rescued* you oh my delightful
little charmer, what a savage surprise
is the rest of your life going to be

BART

This is it Burns. You're never coming back.

BURNS

(*Sly, mocking*.)

What, never?

BART

No, never!

BURNS

(*The same*.)

What, never?

Maybe Bart drives the other sword into Burns? Maybe not. In any case, Burns laughs and regains any lost vigor.

Kill me now Bart Simpson yes
kill me all you like but don't be surprised
when you and I meet again I'm never
leaving I don't go away I'm here for
a hundred years I'm here for a thousand
years a hundred thousand a *million* I
will be here Bart Simpson for Forever

Burns slips into the river. Perhaps there is a brief upsurge of dead piranhas.

BART

You'll stay away Forever!

A SLOW ELECTRIC DAWN

CHORUS

The clouds have parted for the stars

They're glowing stunning in the sky

The rain has ended and the river

Has subsided flowing softly by

The birds are calling for the dawn

On the horizon is first light

And the warm wind of morning

Will dispel this endless night

The warm wind of the morning

Brings the dawn and dawning light

Bart rises, comes to stand at the railing, and slowly starts to sing:

BART

And now that I've lost everything

Now that everyone I love is gone

All I have left is everything

The river carries me on

Though every fear is facing me

And I do not know what next will be

And I cannot know what next I'll see

I'm running forward anyway

I'm not afraid to meet the day

The world is filled with everything

I'm a boy who could be anything

And now I will do everything

The whole world unfurls before me

A great adventure lies before me

I'm reaching out for everything

I'm calling out to everything

There's nothing I'm afraid to be

The world is new and glittery

I run to meet it hopefully

If Ghost Homer is in range, perhaps he steps forward and places a hand on Bart's shoulder for this line:

Love never dies in memory

and I will meet life gloriously

The rest of the cast has come out on stage during the later half of this, there are various vocal back ups, everyone joins on the last line,

As this is happening a variety of fixtures: strings of Christmas tree lights, maybe old theater lights, maybe one of those artificial candle sconces or plastic electric menorahs, table lamps, perhaps even a chandelier, or two!, hung throughout the theater, are clicking on one by one.

As this happens, the actors turn towards each light, indicating it with their hands, encouraging with each new illumination a greater round of applause.

By the end the stage is a blaze of light

ALL

Yes I will meet my life so gloriously
I meet life so gloriously
Yes gloriously

Tableau

Actors take their bows

Actors turn towards the back of the stage and gesture

A curtain in the back slips aside to reveal the actor playing Mr. Burns, powering a treadmill.

We can hear his labored breathing.

The actors lead the audience in applause.

As he runs out of steam we hear his last gasping breaths and as he falters and fails the lights slowly dim, to blackness.

End.